NEW

HISTORY of WAR

HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

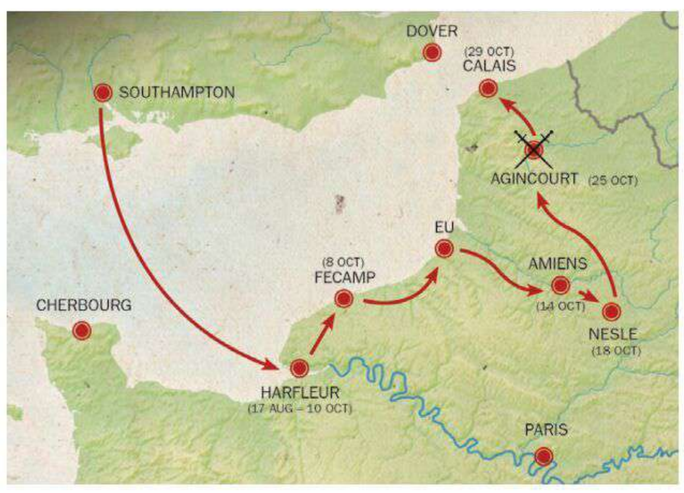
JOAN OF ARC VS HENRY VI

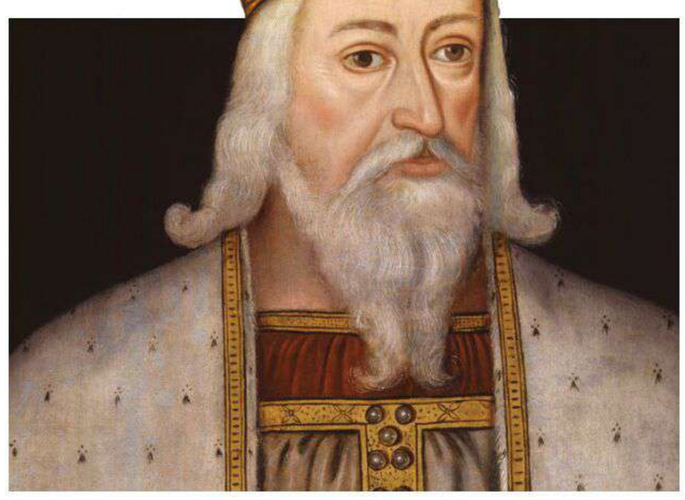
Meet the mercenaries, martyrs and monarchs who defined over a century of bloodshed

THE ROAD TO AGINCOURT

Against all odds, Henry V annihilated French forces

How one conflict ignited a Medieval arms race







Sluys • Crécy • Poitiers • La Rochelle • Verneuil • Castillon

Digital Edition

FUTURE

FOURTH EDITION

HISTORY of WAR

Book of the

HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

In 1420, it seemed that decades of bloodshed and warfare were finally over. Just years earlier, Henry V had led England to victory at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, and with the French at the mercy of England's warrior king, Charles VI of France had no choice but to cede the succession of the throne to his fearsome foe at the Treaty of Troyes. But by 1422, both nations were plunged into turmoil. Henry was dead, and Charles followed him to the grave just months later. The battle for supremacy was reignited, plunging Europe into war once again.

Over the following pages, find out how the roots of the Hundred Years' War stem back to the Norman Conquest of 1066, meet the monarchs and mercenaries who fought for the ultimate prize, and discover the brutal battles that shaped over a century of warfare.

FUTURE

Book of the

HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

Future PLC Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA

Editorial
Editor **Philippa Grafton**
Designer **Rebekka Hearl**
Compiled by **Alice Barnes-Brown & Madelene King**
Editorial Director **Jon White**
Senior Art Editor **Andy Downes**

Cover images
Getty

Photography
All copyrights and trademarks are recognised and respected

Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Commercial Director **Clare Dove**
clare.dove@futurenet.com

International Licensing
Head of Print Licensing **Rachel Shaw**
licensing@futurenet.com

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Matthew Eglinton**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
Production Managers **Keely Miller, Nola Cokely, Vivienne Calvert, Fran Twentyman**

Management
Managing Director **Angie O'Farrell**
Commercial Finance Director **Dan Jotcham**
Head of Art & Design **Greg Whitaker**

Printed by William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU
www.marketforce.co.uk Tel: 0203 787 9001

Book of the Hundred Years' War Fourth Edition (HWB3551)

© 2021 Future Publishing Limited

We are committed to only using magazine paper which is derived from responsibly managed, certified forestry and chlorine-free manufacture. The paper in this bookazine was sourced and produced from sustainable managed forests, conforming to strict environmental and socioeconomic standards. The paper holds full FSC or PEFC certification and accreditation.

All contents © 2021 Future Publishing Limited or published under licence. All rights reserved. No part of this magazine may be used, stored, transmitted or reproduced in any way without the prior written permission of the publisher. Future Publishing Limited (company number 2008885) is registered in England and Wales. Registered office: Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1UA. All information contained in this publication is for information only and is, as far as we are aware, correct at the time of going to press. Future cannot accept any responsibility for errors or inaccuracies in such information. You are advised to contact manufacturers and retailers directly with regard to the price of products/services referred to in this publication. Apps and websites mentioned in this publication are not under our control. We are not responsible for their contents or any other changes or updates to them. This magazine is fully independent and not affiliated in any way with the companies mentioned herein.

FUTURE

Connectors. Creators. Experience Makers.

Future plc is a public company quoted on the London Stock Exchange (symbol: FUTR)
www.futureplc.com

Chief executive **Zillah Byng-Thorne**
Non-executive chairman **Richard Huntingford**
Chief financial officer **Rachel Addison**

Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244

Part of the HISTORY of WAR bookazine series

Widely Recycled

ipso. For press freedom with responsibility

CONTENTS

8 **Roots of the war**
How the conflict that defined Europe traced its roots to the Norman Conquest

16 **A century of bloodshed**
Discover the key battles and events that determined the course of a century

EDWARDIAN WAR

24 **Edward III**
Headstrong and ferocious, the warrior king moulded England into one of Europe's first true superpowers

26 **Philip VI**
For more than two decades, Philip VI ruled France during one of the most turbulent periods in its history

28 **The catalyst**
Just what drove Edward III to antagonise Philip VI and trigger the start of the Hundred Years' War?

30 **War at sea**
Edward III and Philip VI's dispute over the crown of France spilled into the seas separating their kingdoms

34 **The Battle of Crécy**
Edward III won one of the most spectacular victories in European warfare but failed to capitalise on his victory

38 **The Black Prince**
The eldest son of Edward III was a hero whose charisma may have outweighed his accomplishments

40 **John II**
Failing to stabilise the French nation, King John II was often impetuous and prone to ill-advised initiatives

42 **The prince in battle**
How the Black Prince's penchant for mass destruction and calculated violence made him a force to be reckoned with at Poitiers

48 **Treaty of Brétigny**
A humiliation for France, the Treaty of Brétigny brought peace for just a relatively brief period

51 **State of play in 1360**
The state of each nation's territories

CAROLINE WAR

54 **Charles V**
How a mild and unassuming man managed to lead France from devastation to a miraculous recovery

56 **Bertrand du Guesclin**
The rise of a French commander born in obscurity

58 **War of the Breton Succession**
England and France vied for control of Brittany, funding a brutal proxy war that ravaged the territory for years

62 **The saviour of Castile**
How events in the Castilian civil war determined the fate of the Hundred Years' War

66 **The Battle of La Rochelle**
England would see their military ambitions in France slide beneath the waves in this brutal naval clash

68 **The death of the Black Prince**
The death of Edward the Black Prince was a turning point in the history of both England and France

74 **Richard II**
The king whose thirst for revenge led to him losing his crown and his life

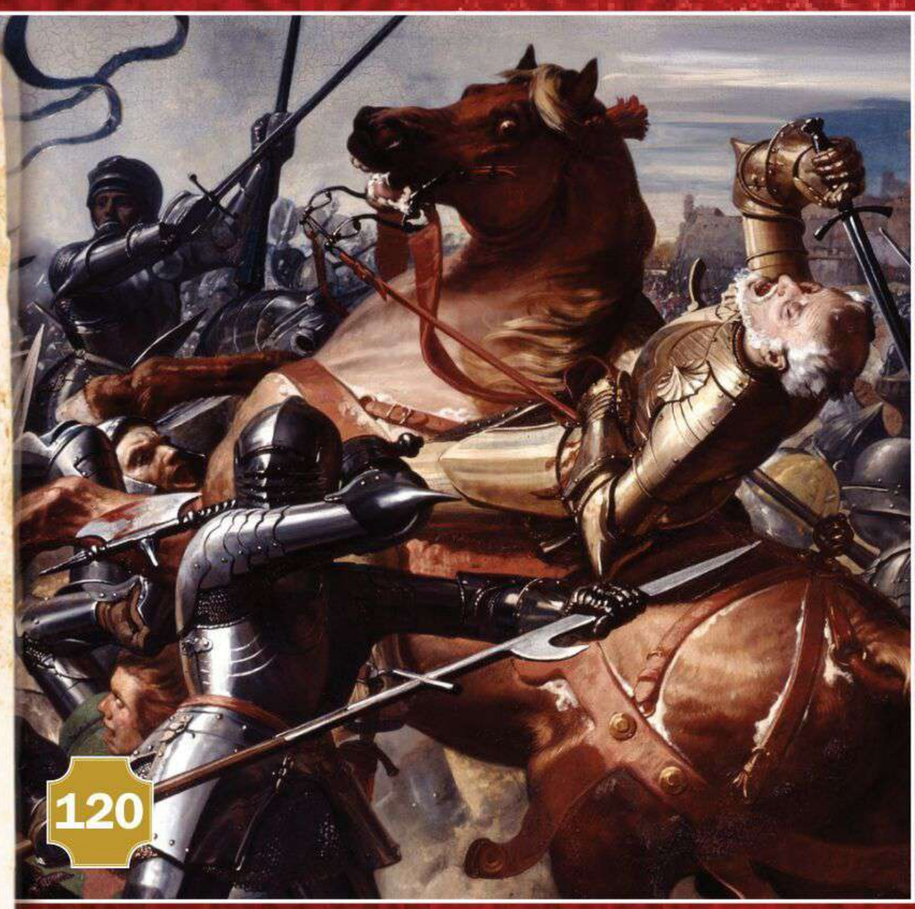
76 **John of Gaunt**
Wealthy, powerful and ostentatious, Edward III's third son could scarcely avoid being unpopular

78 **The long peace**
Anglo-French hostilities ceased between 1359 and 1415 because each nation had its own problems

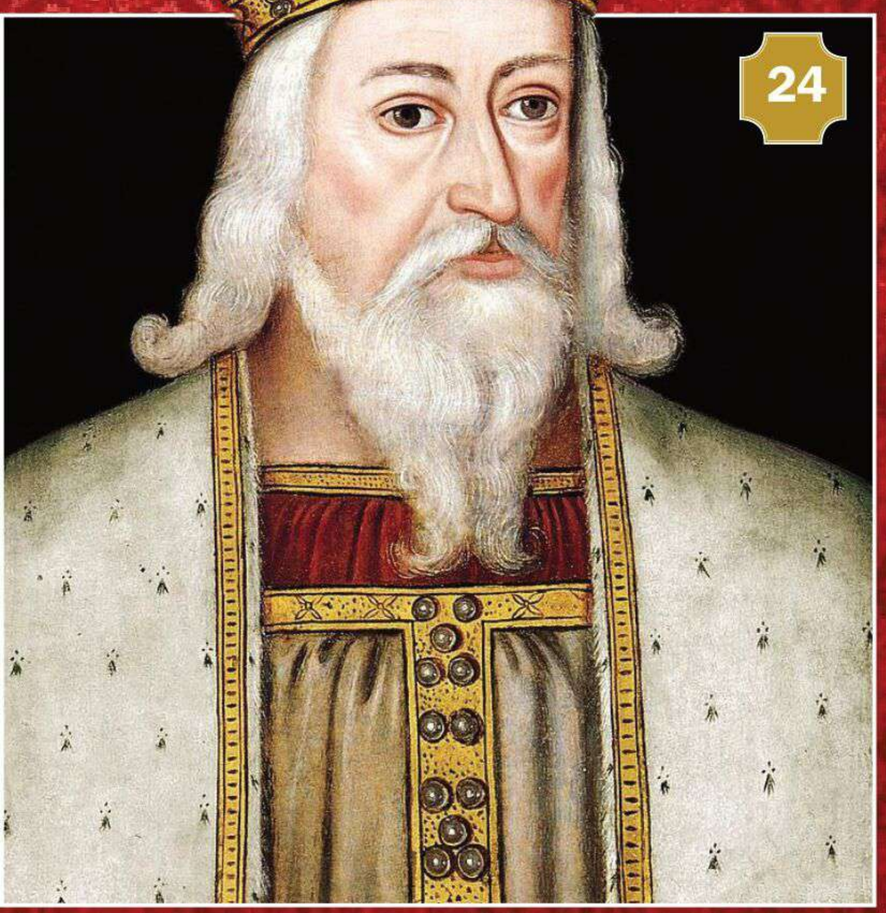
LANCASTRIAN WAR

86 **Charles VI**
The hero of France whose bright future was stolen by insanity

88 **Henry V**
The king who came so close to getting it all











90 The road to Agincourt
After a long truce, Henry V's men took up their longbows and set sail for France

100 Treaty of Troyes
The Treaty of Troyes positioned England's Henry V and his heirs to be the future kings of France

103 State of play in 1435
The state of each nation's territories

104 Occupied Paris
How a combination of forceful conquest and extensive collaboration led to the occupation of Paris

106 Battle of Baugé
England's aura of invincibility was finally lost as a reckless advance saw their forces get obliterated by a coalition of France and Scotland

108 Bedford, the loyal leader
Henry V's younger brother continued the English conquest of France with stunning success

112 Joan of Arc
Behind the legend of the humble peasant girl who helped defeat the English

120 Formigny & Castillon
French determination and military superiority swept the English from Normandy and Gascony in the final phase of the Hundred Years' War

126 Treaty of Picquigny
Edward IV's peaceful treaty to finally end hostilities

127 State of play in 1477
The state of each nation's territories



LEGACY OF THE WAR

130 Unsung heroes
The forgotten figures who fought and died for their nation

134 France's revamped army
French military reforms enacted in 1445 led to the creation of a well-trained standing army unmatched by the English

136 A weapons revolution
The Medieval arms race that revolutionised warfare

140 The decline of feudalism
After five centuries, the feudal system collapsed as a result of internal weaknesses and external pressures









William, Duke of Normandy, is informed of the death of Edward the Confessor and of the coronation of Harold, as depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry

THE ROOTS OF THE WAR

The Hundred Years' War was a conflict to decide the identity of Europe

Words by Derek Wilson

The bloody dispute between France and England known as the Hundred Years' War (although technically it lasted from 1337–1453) in fact had its roots in the unstable relationships between various states in Western Europe stretching back over almost three centuries.

The conflict was both territorial and political. The social system that had evolved to ensure peaceful coexistence between the major landholders was 'feudalism'. This term, not used in the early Middle Ages but coined by later historians, encapsulated the religious and legal understanding of people's relationship to land and to each other. The poet Geoffrey Chaucer explained social hierarchy succinctly in *The Canterbury Tales* (c.1400): "God ordained that some folk should be of higher degree than others and have authority over them, others should be of lower degree and obey their lord, but all of them properly served in his estate and his degree."

Since only God 'owned' the world, everyone controlling parts of it did so as his tenants. Kings were his direct representatives. Tenants-in-chief were the feudal lords who held land from the king and who, in turn, sub-let it to those further down the social ladder. Nobles held land from the king in return for serving him, usually in battle ('knight service'). Lesser landholders paid for their tenancy by providing their lords with an agreed number of soldiers. Theoretically, feudalism provided Europe with cohesion and stability.

However, what the system failed to guard against were the legal complications caused,



Ratification of the Treaty of Paris by Henry III, 13 October 1259

for example, by issues of inheritance, and also human ambition. During the early years of the second millennium much of Western Europe was in a state of anarchy. The Capetian dynasty gradually extended its authority over much of what is now eastern and southern France, but theirs was an uphill battle against barons determined to exercise independent control over their territories (thus challenging the feudal principle). Not until the reign of Philip Augustus (1180–1223) did the expansion of the royal demesne (i.e. land over which the lord exercised real and effective control) begin in earnest.

Meanwhile, England and the southern Channel coast had been experiencing Viking incursions, which gradually changed from plunder-raids to conquest and settlement. One of the northern marauders was William II of Normandy, who inherited the duchy from his father in 1035. By 1062 he had extended his control southwards over the county of Maine. Four years later, he crossed the Channel to

"ENGLAND AND THE CHANNEL COAST HAD BEEN EXPERIENCING VIKING INCURSIONS"



This painting depicts the coronation of King Edward III of England on 1 February 1327

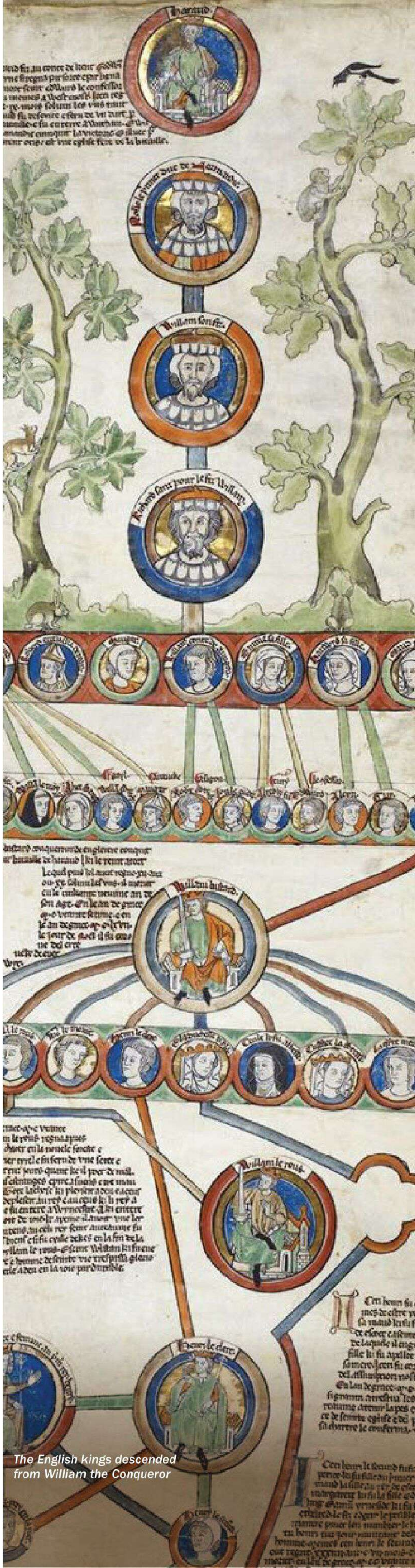
invade England, which he claimed as putative heir of the childless Edward the Confessor. Within a decade his ruthless campaigns had firmly established his power on both sides of the water.

The Conqueror's successors were embroiled for the next century in a series of wars on the continent, during which English kings tried to take advantage of the anarchic situation to extend their possessions. The most successful was Henry II of England (1133–1189), who by force of arms and clever negotiation made himself the most influential monarch in Europe. As part of his grand design he added to his territory (the Angevin Empire) the region of Aquitaine and Gascony, stretching from the Loire to the Pyrenees.

The means by which this agriculturally valuable and strategically significant area became a stake in the game of feudal chess are as complex as they are fascinating. William X, Duke of Aquitaine, married his daughter Eleanor (1122–1204) to Louis VII, king of France before he passed away in 1137. In the normal course of events Aquitaine would have remained a French royal possession, but in 1152 the king and queen divorced. Not only that, Eleanor then married Henry II of England.

"HENRY II MADE HIMSELF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL MONARCH IN EUROPE"

At one time Henry's domains and feudal dependencies extended from mid-Scotland to the Pyrenees and the Mediterranean. Now the fate of Western Europe depended on the outcome of a conflict between the kings of England and France. Henry found himself up



The English kings descended from William the Conqueror

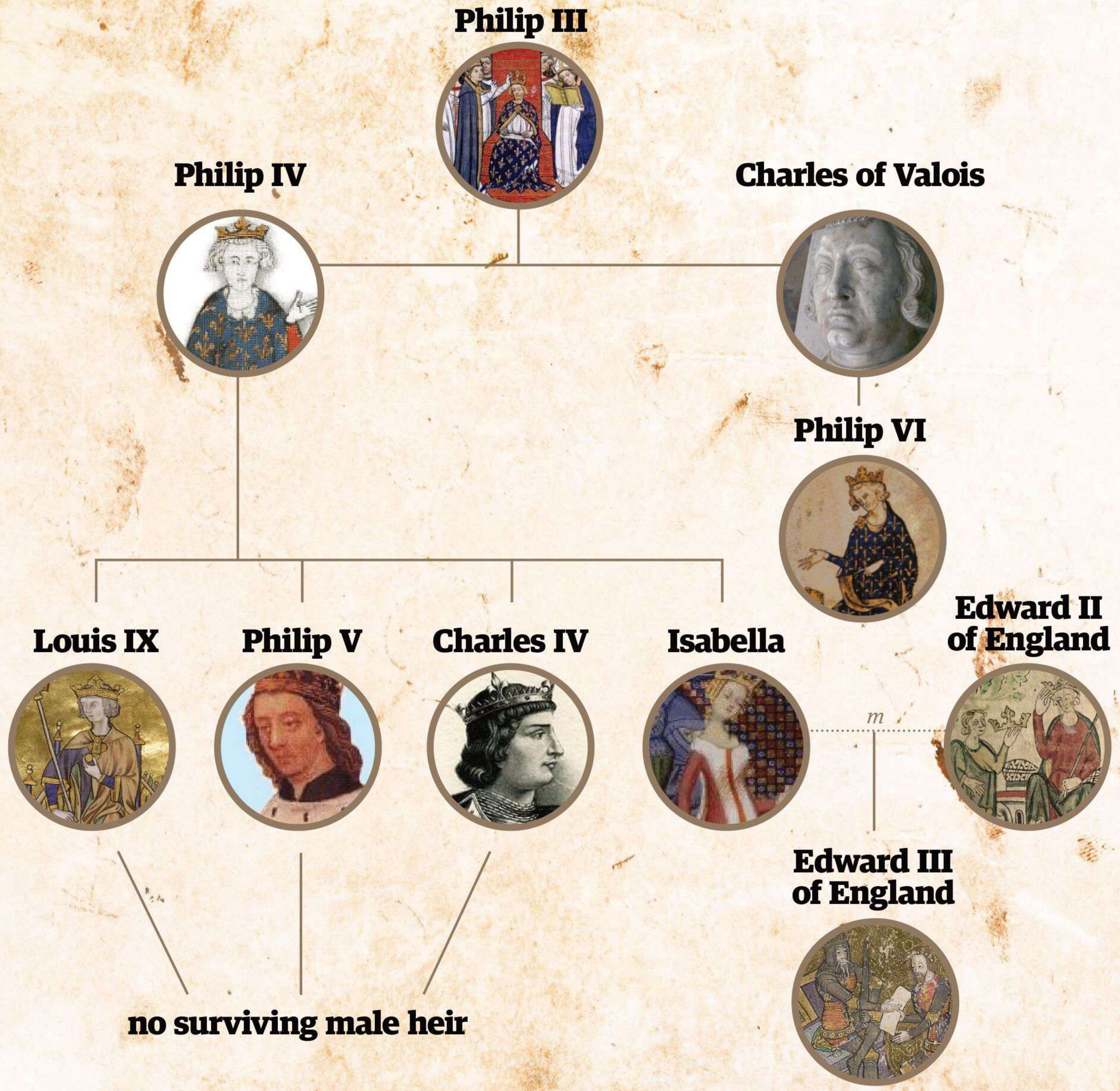
What was Salic Law?

Designed to ensure an easy transition, this law did anything but

The law code that operated in the old Frankish kingdom was founded by King Clovis in the 5th century CE and was known as the Salic or Salian law. It covered many aspects of civil and criminal jurisdiction and was a fundamental influence on the legal system of several European countries.

One stipulation was that "no portion of inheritance shall come to a woman; the whole inheritance of the land shall come to the male sex". This made sense in times of war when kings and landowners had to defend their rights in battle, but it created problems when their only surviving children were female. In such circumstances, which male was next in line?

The crisis that eventually provoked the Hundred Years' War stemmed from the unfortunate death of male heirs, which put an end to the Capetian dynasty in France. The brothers Louis IX, Philip V and Charles IV ruled in succession. Charles' only legitimate child, born posthumously in 1328, was a girl. His sister Isabella then claimed the throne for her son, who had recently become king of England. As the nearest male relative, Philip of Valois, cousin of the deceased Charles IV, also asserted his claim on the grounds that Salic law barred Edward from inheriting through the female line.



Edward I paying fealty to Philip IV of France



Henry III's Westminster Abbey as it would have appeared before the two western towers were added in the 18th century

against an expansionist opponent who was his equal in energy, guile and statecraft.

It was Philip Augustus who laid the foundation of a strong, centralised monarchy. He asserted his authority over several of the barons who had previously sided with the English king. Philip also fomented discord between Henry and his sons. A result of this was that one of them, Richard, threw in his lot with the French king and received Aquitaine from him as his feudal overlord. However, on Richard's death while on crusade in 1199 the territory reverted to Eleanor, and when she died in 1204 it was absorbed back into the Angevin Empire. Thus was created a territorial rivalry that would fester for more than two centuries and lead ultimately to the Hundred Years' War.

Louis VIII, the 'Lion' (1187–1226), continued his father's work and at one point actually invaded England and claimed the throne. During the long reign of Henry III, the king was largely preoccupied with establishing control over the English barons, although he still jealously clung to his continental possessions. By the middle of the 13th century most of Henry II's gains had been wiped out, with only Gascony still swearing allegiance to the king of England.

"PREOCCUPIED WITH THE ENGLISH BARONS, HENRY STILL JEALOUSLY CLUNG TO HIS CONTINENTAL POSSESSIONS"

In these years Western Europe was dominated by the reigns of two kings remarkable for their longevity and piety. Louis IX of France (1214–1270) and Henry III of England (1207–1272) were related by marriage: Eleanor, Henry's wife, was Louis' sister. Both men were also devout (Louis was later canonised), and their faith led them to vie with each other in the building of magnificent churches.

Louis brought to completion the reconstruction of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris and set in hand the building of Reims Cathedral in the latest Perpendicular style. In reply, Henry pulled down much of the abbey church at Westminster and oversaw the design and construction of the building that still stands as the outstanding monument of his reign.

Of the two men, Louis was the more effective ruler: he did not allow high morals or religious sentiment to stand in the way of asserting control over his territory. He was also more competent than his contemporary as a war leader. Henry was eager to regain his hereditary



Edward I depicted in a 13th-century manuscript



Isabella of France, wife to Edward II, returns to England in an attempt to claim the throne for her son

"AT TIMES EDWARD FOUND HIMSELF FACED BY A WAR ON THREE FRONTS – IN WALES, SCOTLAND AND AQUITAINE"

lands on the continent, but his attempts at military intervention achieved nothing.

By this time the English barons identified more with the island they had come to regard as home and had little taste for cross-Channel adventure, which was likely to bring them little material reward. Gascony was economically important to the king because of the wine trade of Bordeaux and the excise duties this brought to the Crown. In 1249 Henry granted Gascony to his son Edward (later Edward I).

Ten years later the two kings made a serious attempt to sort out their rival claims in mainland Europe. By the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1259) Henry acknowledged the loss of Normandy, Maine, Anjou and Poitou but retained Gascony, to which was added parts of Aquitaine. The English king held this territory as a feudal dukedom, for which he gave allegiance to Louis. The treaty resolved issues that had divided the two kingdoms for a century, but its inherent weakness was that, while supposedly an agreement between equals, it subordinated Henry in his French territories. This meant that every major dispute involving the territory's nobles and town councils had to be referred to London and/or Paris. Legal wrangling frustrated everyone involved and inevitably ratcheted up tension between the two royal regimes. In hindsight we can see that what was happening was the lingering death of feudalism caused by its own complications and contradictions.

Tensions led to war again during the reigns of Edward I (1239–1307) and Philip IV of France (1268–1314). Both were strong and effective rulers who increased royal power and prestige through military endeavour, administrative reform and diplomatic skill. At various times Edward found himself faced by war on three fronts – in Wales, Scotland and Aquitaine. Inevitably this impacted his effectiveness in all three theatres. It was also very costly. The king's frequent appeals for extra taxes had two important results. Edward called more parliaments than any of his predecessors, thus increasing the power of that body. At the same time, the financial burden served to weaken the king's standing at home. Even so, as far as his French lands were concerned things began well.

In 1286 he crossed the Channel and devoted most of three years to strengthening his rule in the southwest. He went first to Paris, where he reached an agreement with Philip IV confirming his holding of most of Aquitaine while ceding the rest to the French king in return for payment.

Edward devoted considerable energy to revising the laws that operated in the various lands of Aquitaine and to establishing trustworthy men in office. This was a



A 16th-century view of Paris, with the looming cathedral of Notre Dame standing tall on the central island

complicated exercise, since different customs and laws pertained in the regions, but the king's attention to detail indicated his commitment to the rule of law and to ensuring the rights of his subjects. He also took the popular steps of confiscating all Jewish property and expelling the Jews from his territory, a stratagem he would repeat in England. However, Edward's absence from England demonstrated how difficult it was becoming to govern his far-flung lands. In 1289 the English parliament refused to vote him any more taxes until he came home.

The next clash began in 1293, not in Aquitaine but in the English Channel. Spats between French and English ships were frequent. These disturbances had little to do with national governments but sprang from the rivalries of various groups who were little better than pirates. The 1293 battle was particularly savage. The Cinque Ports fleet from the Kent and Sussex coast attacked French shipping off Brittany and went on to sack La Rochelle. Both Edward and Philip were powerless to control their unruly subjects and had in fact forbidden such incidents. On the other hand, such unauthorised behaviour could always be turned into a casus belli. This is what Philip now did.

He demanded that Edward report to him to make amends. Meanwhile, he vented his indignation on the Gascons by ordering over 100 officials to be rounded up and imprisoned 'on account of the damage done to Normans on the coast of Brittany'. Edward sent representatives to Paris to negotiate a settlement, but Philip regarded as an affront his failure to appear in person and authorised the seizure of the duchy. This led to open war, which rumbled on until 1298, when it was ended by peace negotiations.

In 1308, after the death of Edward I, his son Edward II married Philip's daughter Isabella in an attempt to put an end to the long-running royal feud. In fact, the deep-seated causes of tension between the two royal houses had not been resolved and the marriage of Edward and Isabella led to the later succession dispute regarding the French crown. As the historian Sir Maurice Powicke observed, "The Treaty of 1303 was but an incident, a breathing-space in the interminable wrangle which the treaty of 1259 had produced."

A CENTURY OF BLOODSHED

Trace over 100 years of dynastic disputes with this handy timeline

ENGLAND
BATTLES
FRANCE

EDWARD III BECOMES KING
1327

SECOND WAR OF SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE BEGINS
1332

BATTLE OF SLUYS
24 June 1340
ENGLAND
Taking place off the coast of Flanders and Zeeland, French ships tie themselves together and anchor to create a strong defence. This proves to be a disaster as English longbowmen were able to rain arrows on the immobile French ships, destroying the vast majority of the fleet.

BATTLE OF SAINT-OMER
26 July 1340
FRANCE

WAR OF THE BRETON SUCCESSION BEGINS
1341

BATTLE OF MORLAIX
30 September 1342
FRANCE

PHILIP VI BECOMES KING
1328

BATTLE OF CADZAND
November 1337
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF ARNEMUIDEN
23 September 1338
FRANCE

SIEGE OF TOURNAI
July – September 1340
FRANCE

BATTLE OF CHAMPTOCEAUX
14–16 October 1341
FRANCE

BATTLE OF BREST
18 August 1342
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF AUBEROCHE
21 October 1345
ENGLAND
French forces attempt to take the village of Auberoche. An English force of 1,500 men, led by Henry, Earl of Derby, ambush the French camp as they sit down to eat and defeat the French army of 7,000. It is rumoured that during the siege, an English messenger from the village was captured and flung back in using a siege engine.

BATTLE OF ST POL DE LÉON
9 June 1346
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF BLANCHETAQUE
24 August 1346
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF NEVILLE'S CROSS
17 October 1346
ENGLAND

As part of the Auld Alliance with France, a Scottish army made up of 12,000 men marches to Durham, expecting to find few defenders as England is preoccupied with the French. Surprised by the size of the English army, the Scots are defeated and King David II is captured while attempting to flee.

JOHN II BECOMES KING
1350

BATTLE OF WINCHELSEA
29 August 1350
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF CAEN
26 July 1346
ENGLAND

Edward III's army travels through a number of towns in northwest Normandy, sacking and looting as it goes, hoping to demoralise the French. The English quickly seize and sack the town of Caen, the area's political and financial centre, burning it down, and taking few prisoners.

BATTLE OF CRÉCY
26 August 1346
ENGLAND

SIEGE OF CALAIS
September 1346 – August 1347
ENGLAND

Edward III and his men approach the city, France's closest port to England, but do little over two months while they gather siege equipment. French supply ships are cut off by the English navy, depleting the city's food and water. The city surrenders almost a year later.

BATTLE OF LA ROCHE-DERRIEN
1347
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF ARDRES
6 June 1351
FRANCE

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

COMBAT OF THE THIRTY
26 March 1351
FRANCE
Called one of the most chivalrous battles, 30 knights and squires from each side fight for the duchy of Brittany on behalf of the Houses of Blois and Montfort. They battle for several hours until a French squire mounts a horse, breaking the English line and forcing them to surrender.

BATTLE OF MONTMURAN
1354
FRANCE

TREATY OF BERWICK ENDS SECOND WAR OF SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE
1357

BATTLE OF COCHEREL
16 May 1364
FRANCE

BATTLE OF NÁJERA
3 April 1367
ENGLAND
As part of the Castilian Civil War, a force made up of troops from England, Aquitaine, Majorca and Navarre defeat an army led by Count Henry of Trastámara, who has the support of France. Despite winning, Edward, the Black Prince, feels they have failed as they haven't captured Henry.

ENGLAND
BATTLES
FRANCE

BATTLE OF COMBORN
1353
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF MAURON
1352
ENGLAND

CHARLES V BECOMES KING
1364

TREATY OF GUÉRANDE ENDS WAR OF THE BRETON SUCCESSION
1365

BATTLE OF MONTIEL
14 March 1369
FRANCE

BATTLE OF AURAY
29 September 1364
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF POITIERS
19 September 1356
ENGLAND
King John II takes an army into battle against Edward, the Black Prince, who is marching north from the south of France and sacking settlements along the way. Despite heavily outnumbering the English forces, John's army is defeated and he and one of his sons are both captured.

RICHARD II BECOMES KING
1377

BATTLE OF LA ROCHELLE
22-23 June 1372
FRANCE
(CASTILE)

SIEGE OF LIMOGES
September 1370
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF CHISET
21 March 1373
FRANCE

BATTLE OF AGINCOURT
25 October 1415
ENGLAND

A lack of leadership on the French side contributes to a hasty attack, which is countered by Henry V. He uses the narrow, muddy fields to slow down the French forces, making it easy for his archers to attack. It is estimated that around 80 per cent of the English force is made up of men using longbows.

SIEGE OF HARFLEUR
August – September 1415
ENGLAND

HENRY IV BECOMES KING
1399

BATTLE OF LA ROCHELLE
30 December 1419
FRANCE
(CASTILE)

BATTLE OF PONTVALLAIN
4 December 1370
FRANCE

The first significant win for France, the battle consists of two conflicts. Bertrand du Guesclin, the constable of France, marches with his army through the night to catch up with English forces, taking them by surprise at Pontvallain. The English flee to Vaas where they are ultimately defeated.

BATTLE OF ROOSEBEKE
27 November 1382
FRANCE

CHARLES VI BECOMES KING
1380

HENRY V BECOMES KING
1413

SIEGE OF ROUEN
July 1418 – January 1419
ENGLAND

Henry V, in his goal of conquering all of Normandy, seizes Rouen. The city is the capital of Normandy and one of the most important towns for the French. English forces surround Rouen to cut off all supplies and when reinforcements don't arrive after several months, the city surrenders.

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

BATTLE OF BAUGÉ
22 March 1421
FRANCE
The Duke of Clarence attacks a Franco-Scot army in hopes of catching them by surprise but the enemy forces are larger than expected. The outnumbered English troops are wiped out and the Duke of Clarence dies. There are no clear sources as to how he was killed.

CHARLES VII BECOMES KING
1422

BATTLE OF LA BROSSINIÈRE
26 September 1423
FRANCE

SIEGE OF ORLÉANS
October 1428 – May 1429
FRANCE
English forces attempt to take Orléans, believing that doing so will guarantee that England conquers all of France. After several months of fighting, it looks as if the English might take the city but Joan of Arc arrives with more troops and the battle swings in favour of the French.

ENGLAND
BATTLES
FRANCE

BATTLE OF FRESNAY
3 March 1420
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF MEAUX
October 1421 – May 1422
ENGLAND

HENRY VI BECOMES KING
1422

BATTLE OF CRAVANT
31 July 1423
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF ST JAMES
6 March 1426
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF VERNEUIL
17 August 1424
ENGLAND
An English army led by John, Duke of Bedford, wipes out almost all of the Scottish forces, including Archibald, Earl of Douglas, and John Stewart, Earl of Buchan. Although some Scots remain in France, this is the last battle that the country plays a significant part in.

BATTLE OF LA ROCHELLE
22-23 June 1372
FRANCE
(CASTILE)

BATTLE OF PATAY
18 June 1429
FRANCE

BATTLE OF FORMIGNY
15 April 1450
FRANCE
The first major battle to use cannons, the French use them as they can shoot further than the English longbowmen. A Breton force flanks the English, catching them off-guard and leaving them unable to defend properly. The defeat leaves the English without a force to defend Normandy.

BATTLE OF THE HERRINGS
12 February 1429
ENGLAND

BATTLE OF BEAUGENCY
16–17 June 1429
FRANCE

BATTLE OF JARGEAU
12 June 1429
FRANCE
Joan of Arc's first offensive conflict sees her lead the French Army along with John II of Alençon. Jargeau is the first battle in France's attempt to recapture the English-controlled cities along the Loire. In the series of skirmishes, the majority of England's top commanders will be killed or captured.

BATTLE OF MEUNG-SUR-LOIRE
15 June 1429
FRANCE

BATTLE OF GERBEVOY
9 May 1435
FRANCE

BATTLE OF ROUEN
29 October 1449
FRANCE

BATTLE OF CASTILLON
17 July 1453
FRANCE

EDWARDIAN WAR

Now known as the Edwardian war, the first phase of the Hundred Years' War ran from 1337 to the peace treaty of 1360

24 Edward III
Headstrong and ferocious, the warrior king moulded England into one of Europe's first true superpowers

26 Philip VI
For more than two decades, Philip VI ruled France during one of the most turbulent periods in its history

28 The catalyst
Just what drove Edward III to antagonise Philip VI and trigger the start of the Hundred Years' War?

30 War at sea
Edward III and Philip VI's dispute over the crown of France spilled into the seas separating their kingdoms

34 The Battle of Crécy
Edward III won one of the most spectacular victories in European warfare but failed to capitalise on his victory

38 The Black Prince
The eldest son of Edward III was a hero whose charisma may have outweighed his accomplishments

40 John II
Failing to stabilise the French nation, King John II was often impetuous and prone to ill-advised initiatives

42 The prince of darkness
How the Black Prince's penchant for mass destruction and calculated violence made him a force to be reckoned with at Poitiers

48 Treaty of Brétigny
A humiliation for France, the Treaty of Brétigny brought peace for just a relatively brief period

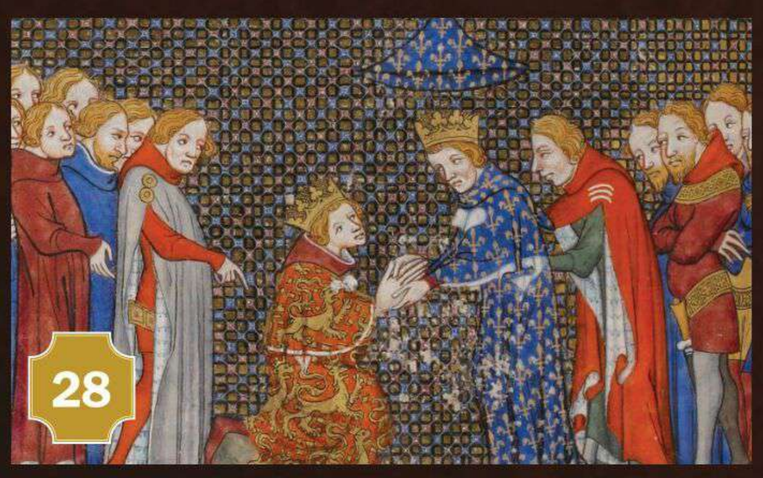
51 State of play in 1360
The state of each nation's territories













48



26



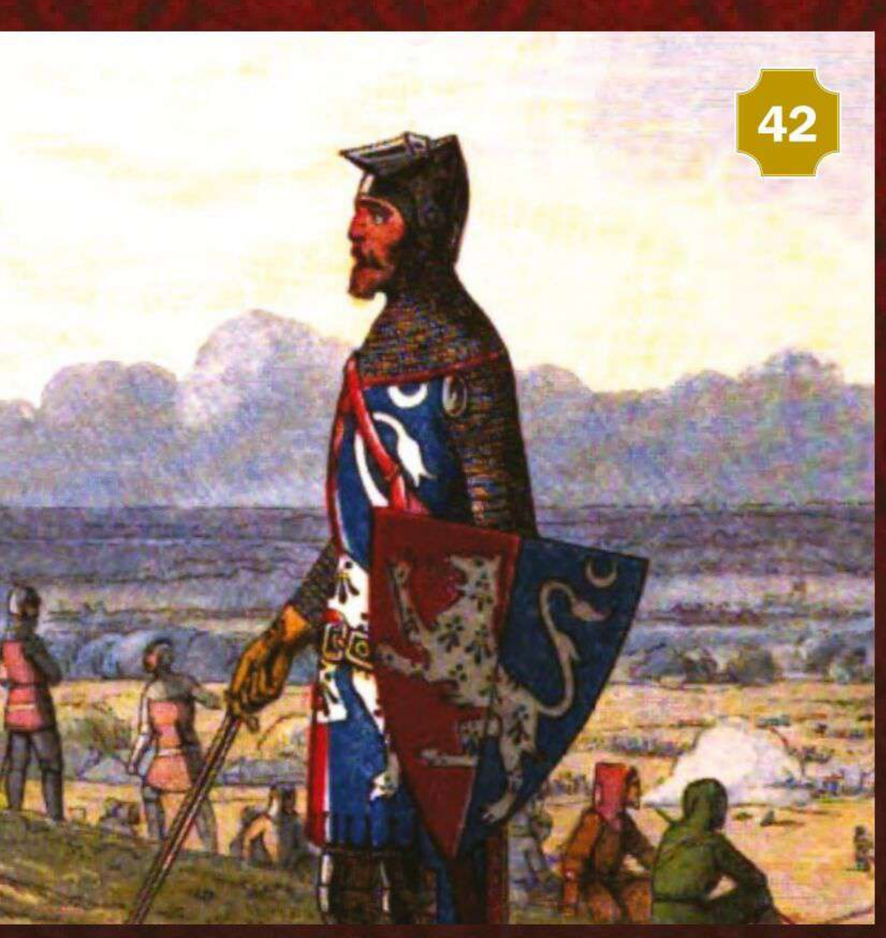
38



34


grans seigniries que chun vouloit
monstrer sa puissance. Si nest
nul homme combien il fust
present a la tonce qui sceust
ne peust ymaginer ne recor
der la verite. Especialement
de la partie des francois tant
y eut pouure arroy et petite
ordonnance en leurs grans
conroys qui estoient sans
nombre. Et ce que ie scay
de leurs besongnes et ordon
nances et ce que ie diray
nay et determineray y en ce
leur de lay sceu et apprins
le plus par moult vaillans
hommes dangleterre saiges
et discrets tant chevaliers
comme autres qui moult
ententifuement auoyent
leur comenant. Et aussi
par les gens de messire iehan
de haynault qui furent
touiours delez le roy
phle de france. Cy ple de la
bataille de cressy entre le roy de
france et le roy dangleterre.

42



KEY PLAYER

EDWARD III

Headstrong and ferocious, both as a domestic ruler and a military leader, the warrior king of House Plantagenet moulded England into one of Europe's first true superpowers

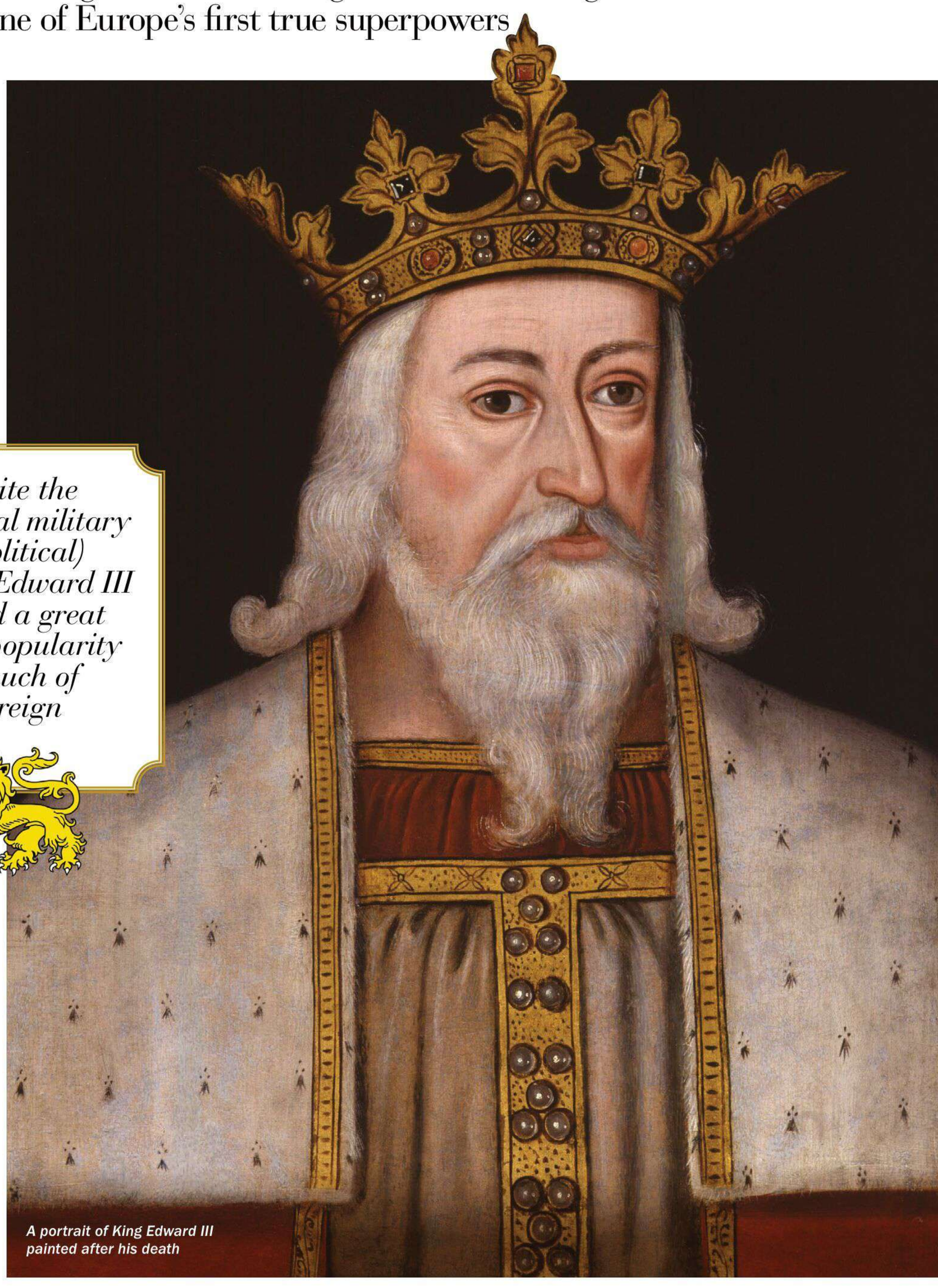
King Edward III was one of the most proactive and – more importantly – successful rulers England and its surrounding realms have ever known. His half-century of rule saw plague, wars, political intrigue and judicial upheaval that collectively transformed our small island into a military powerhouse. It was quite the dramatic period of English history and Edward's road to kingship was just as theatrical.

Born at Windsor Castle on 13 November 1312, Edward was the only child of King Edward II and his wife, Isabella of France. His father had spent a great deal of his reign battling a political rivalry with his own gentry and the birth of a strong male heir helped fortify his position, at least for a time. In 1325, Edward II was required to pay homage to the French king, Charles IV. Uneasy at leaving the country during an ongoing war with Scotland, the king sent his 13-year-old son and his wife Isabella on behalf of the crown. However, Isabella conspired with the exiled Roger Mortimer to usurp the king and set up Prince Edward in his place.

Despite the occasional military (or political) setback, Edward III enjoyed a great deal of popularity for much of his reign

While the young Edward was now king, he was really nothing more than a political pawn for his mother and Mortimer. In order to gain French military backing for an invasion, Isabella organised an engagement to the 12 year-old Philippa of Hainault and soon Mortimer arrived on English soil with an army behind him. Edward II stood down as king, with Mortimer ruling as the de facto leader while the young Edward came of age.

Mortimer was monarch in all but name and his unpopularity grew as he gathered titles and lands for himself. The situation reached breaking point on 19 October 1330 when the young king and a group of his most trusted allies entered Nottingham Castle through an underground passage and quickly arrested the treasonous Mortimer. At long last, the time for Edward's personal reign had finally begun.



A portrait of King Edward III painted after his death

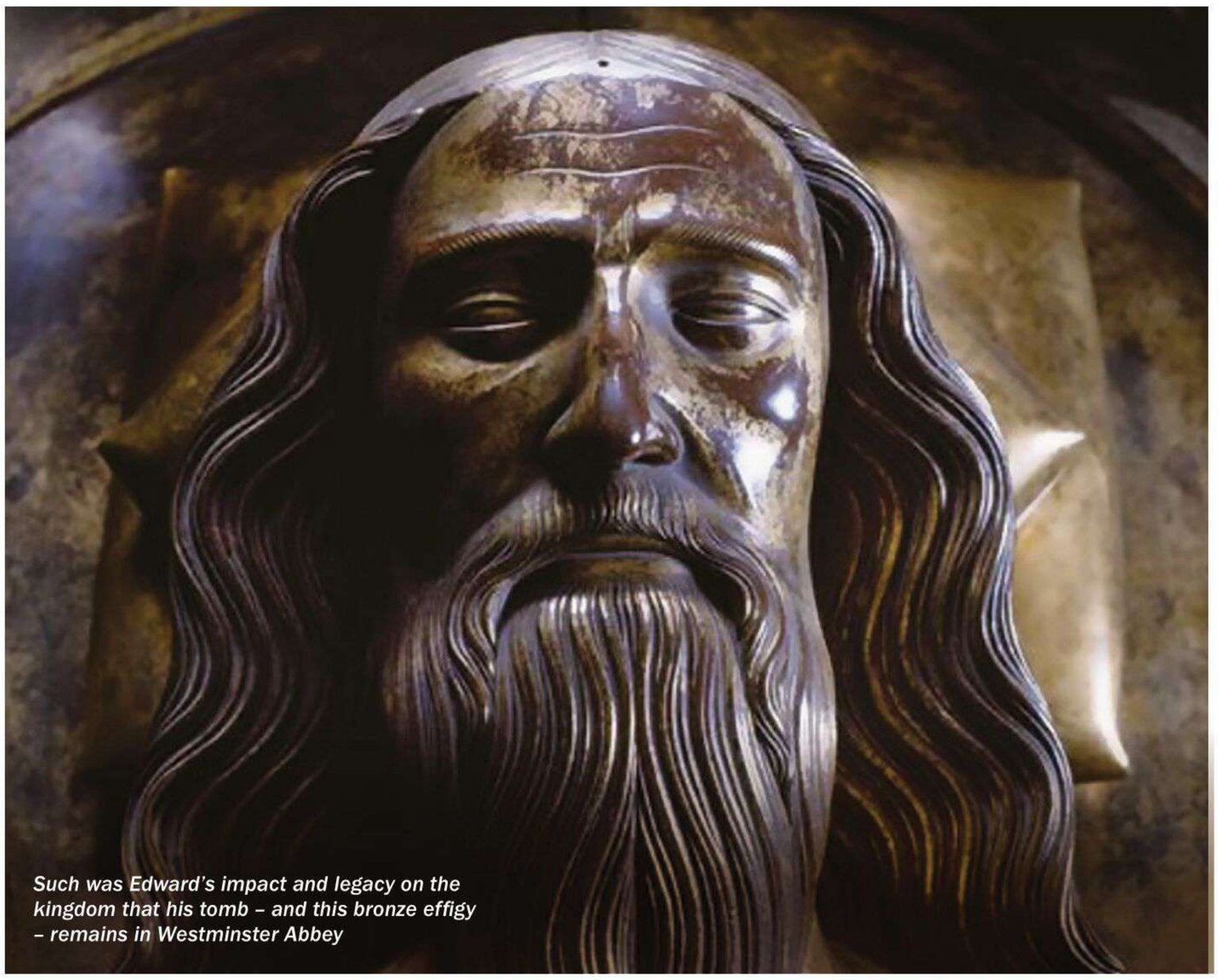
Edward's rule started the way it would continue for 50 years: at war. His father had continued to pay homage to the French king for most of his reign, but all that was about to change. As a man, Edward was headstrong and direct; as a monarch, this made him very dangerous indeed. Edward decided to make a claim for the French throne, citing his blood connection to Philip IV. The French responded by rejecting the claim under Salic Law (a manuscript from the Middle Ages that defined the foundations of French legislation, including the rules of succession). This butting of political heads would form the origins of the Hundred Years' War, a conflict that would draw most of Europe into its numerous battles.

While the conflict would ultimately go England's way, funding a rebuilt navy and constant military campaigns placed considerable strain on England's economy. Edward needed cash to keep pressing the French, but he found the coffers had almost run dry. Edward would eventually gain the funding he needed, but it came at a price: in April 1341, Parliament drafted a new grant of taxation, but in return Edward had to accept certain limitations on his spending. Such rules irked the king, but it served as one of his first tastes of a parliament willing to stand up to the absolute rule of its monarch.

Edward was steadfast in his desire to expand England's hold over French territories. Victories over King Philip VI at the Battle of Crécy (as well as putting down a campaign by King David II of Scotland) rocked France, and it wasn't until the Treaty of Brétigny that Edward finally renounced his claim on the French throne. So dominant was England at this time that Edward claimed full sovereignty over the lands that he had conquered in France (which amounted to almost a third of the country at the time).

The decade of the 1350s saw something of a boom in legislative activity. Edward's frustration with the murkiness of England's judicial system was just the impetus he needed to streamline the political landscape. This was especially important in light of the Black Death, a bubonic plague which killed more than a third of the country's population. He initially attempted to deal with the shortages of labour with legislation that made work more palatable, but it wasn't enough to settle the problem. However, his removal of papal benefices, his reformation of laws surrounding treason and the increased power provided to the roaming justices of the peace had a profound effect that echoed long after his death.

While the majority of Edward's reign was energetic and filled with military conquests, the latter part of his rule strayed into the opposite. Bored by the machinations of domestic kingship, the aging Edward relied more and more on his most prominently active children, Edward the Black Prince, Lionel Duke of Clarence and John Duke of Lancaster. In the hands of his sons, England lost a significant amount of its lands in France, a fact that made them very unpopular with the English public. Ironically, while he lived through most of these disasters until his death in 1377, Edward's descent into obscurity only served to preserve the legacy of his earlier reign.



Such was Edward's impact and legacy on the kingdom that his tomb – and this bronze effigy – remains in Westminster Abbey

Life in the time of the 50-year king

Death, triumphant

While Edward III did many things to put England back on the political map within Europe, nothing could have prepared the nation for the Black Death. It ravaged Europe from 1346 to 1353, killing between 75 and 200 million people across the continent. In England, the disease wiped out over a third of the population.

A new form of government

During Edward's reign, the English Parliament began to take a very familiar shape. The institution became bicameral in nature, which meant that Parliament divided into two separate assemblies, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Such features as the role of speaker and Parliament's ability to impeach were also introduced in this period.

Order of the Garter

Edward had planned to introduce a setup similar to Arthur's symbolic Round Table, but the idea soon fell through. In its place, the English king established the Order of the Garter, an honorary cabal reserved only for the most chivalrous gentleman (and ladies) in the land. New appointments are always announced on St George's Day.

Laws of the land

The substantial loss of population caused by the infamous Black Death caused a crisis within England's economy, with a dramatic decrease in the supply of labour. This resulted in the Statute Of Labourers 1351 being passed in order to suppress the workforce. The new law prohibited increases in wages and the movement of workers from their home areas in search of better conditions.

Keeping the peace

Justice of the peace – a role created during the time of Henry II – saw its most formative years under Edward III. Justices were the eyes, ears and word of the king and these men travelled to the kingdom's far corners to enact the law in his name. Under Edward's influence, justices could not only make arrests but also try suspects for felonies.

KEY PLAYER

PHILIP VI

The first French king of the House of Valois, it was Philip's tentative claim to the throne that triggered the Hundred Years' War

Crowned at Reims Cathedral on 29 May 1328, King Philip VI ascended the throne of France under unusual circumstances. Although he was of the royal House of Valois, to many observers his claim to the throne was shaky at best. During his reign, Philip was given the nickname 'the Fortunate'. Perhaps this is a reflection of his ability to retain power against all odds, as he was constantly contending with a potential usurper, a lengthy war, or the spectre of the Black Death that swept across France and much of Europe in the mid-14th century.

The legacy of Philip's reign lies primarily in the consequences of the Hundred Years' War, fought intermittently from 1337 to 1453, which shaped the balance of power in Europe for centuries and gave rise to the national identities of modern England and France. When French king Charles IV died in 1328 without a male heir, a controversy emerged as to his successor. English king Edward III was indeed closest to the deceased king – the son of his sister, Isabella of France, and therefore his nephew. However, Philip of Valois, a cousin of Charles IV, became the first French king of the House of Valois via the invocation of the Salic Law, an ancient code that dated to the 6th century and the time of Clovis, the first Frankish king. Invoked following a meeting of French nobles and clergy, Salic Law decreed that females were not eligible to claim the throne of France, and later that claims to the throne through female lineage were invalid.

It followed that Isabella could not pass the throne to her son, since she never legally possessed the right to the throne herself. When Charles IV died, his widow, Jeanne d'Évreux, was pregnant. If she delivered a male child, it would be heir to the crown. Philip assumed the role of regent until the birth of a baby girl – Blanche, on 1 April 1328 – opened the door for his ascent to the throne.

Philip VI was wounded in battle with Edward III's English army at Crécy, but managed to avoid death or capture during the catastrophic defeat

Although Edward III acquiesced to the coronation of Philip VI, and the two maintained reasonably cordial relations for several years, a series of disagreements eventually led to the outbreak of the Hundred Years' War. During the period, English kings and barons controlled fiefs or duchies – vast tracts of land on the European continent that would later be incorporated into modern-day France. When Edward was summoned to pay tribute to Philip because of his holdings in the province of Aquitaine and other lands, the English monarch delivered an address that caused many to question the extent of his loyalty.

Shortly after becoming king, Philip responded to a call for assistance from Louis I, Count of Flanders. A peasant revolt against excessive taxation and Louis' pro-French policies had erupted from time to time during the previous five years. Philip sent the French army to intervene, and his forces ruthlessly crushed the revolt, winning a decisive victory at the Battle of Cassel in August 1328. In 1334, the French king incensed Edward III by harbouring Scotland's king David II and swearing to defend the interests of the House of Bruce during



The Battle of Crécy, a crucial English victory in the Hundred Years' War, brought troubled times for French king Philip VI



King Philip VI of France reigned for over 20 years during some of France's most turbulent decades

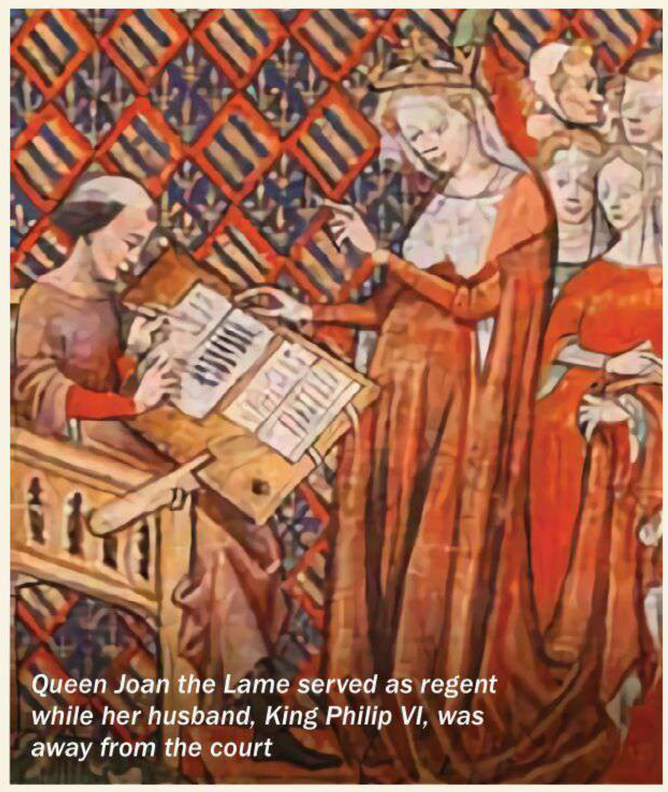
Joan the Lame

The strong-willed Queen of France asserted her will at court while King Philip VI was campaigning during the Hundred Years' War

Although Joan of Burgundy, Queen of France and first wife of King Philip VI, was also known as Joan the Lame, there is no conclusive evidence as to what kind of deformity she may have suffered, or whether she was physically handicapped at all.

What is known is that she served capably as regent during the King's extended absences commanding his army in the Hundred Years' War. Joan gained a reputation as a headstrong individual who dominated the administration of courtly affairs, and also became known as 'the lame, evil queen'.

A woman of keen intellect, Joan was a lover of books. She was responsible for the translation of numerous works into common French and was the mother of Philip's successor, King John II. She died from the plague on 12 December 1349 and was buried at the Basilica of Saint Denis. However, her tomb was destroyed during the French Revolution.



Queen Joan the Lame served as regent while her husband, King Philip VI, was away from the court

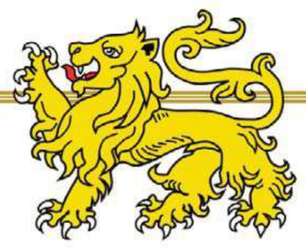
a period of continuing strife between England and Scotland. Within three years, Edward countered, concluding an alliance with Holy Roman Emperor Louis IV.

As tensions mounted, the relationship reached a tipping point when Robert III of Artois, formerly a trusted advisor to Philip, fled to England after committing serious offences, including forgery in an attempt to claim the countship of Artois in opposition to a member of the French royal family. When Philip's demand for Robert's extradition to stand trial in France in December 1336 was rejected, he was outraged. On 24 May 1337, he declared that Edward III should forfeit the province of Aquitaine and that he was now the sworn enemy of France.

Edward III revived his claim to the French crown, and the ensuing Hundred Years' War became a seesaw affair as the fortunes of the antagonists and their allies ebbed and flowed. Military action was minimal for the first three years, but a devastating defeat of Philip's navy at the Battle of Sluys in 1340 restricted France's offensive capability. Meanwhile, dissent among French nobles undermined Philip's power and required a Great Council in 1343, due to fears of the growing influence of the Duke of Burgundy.

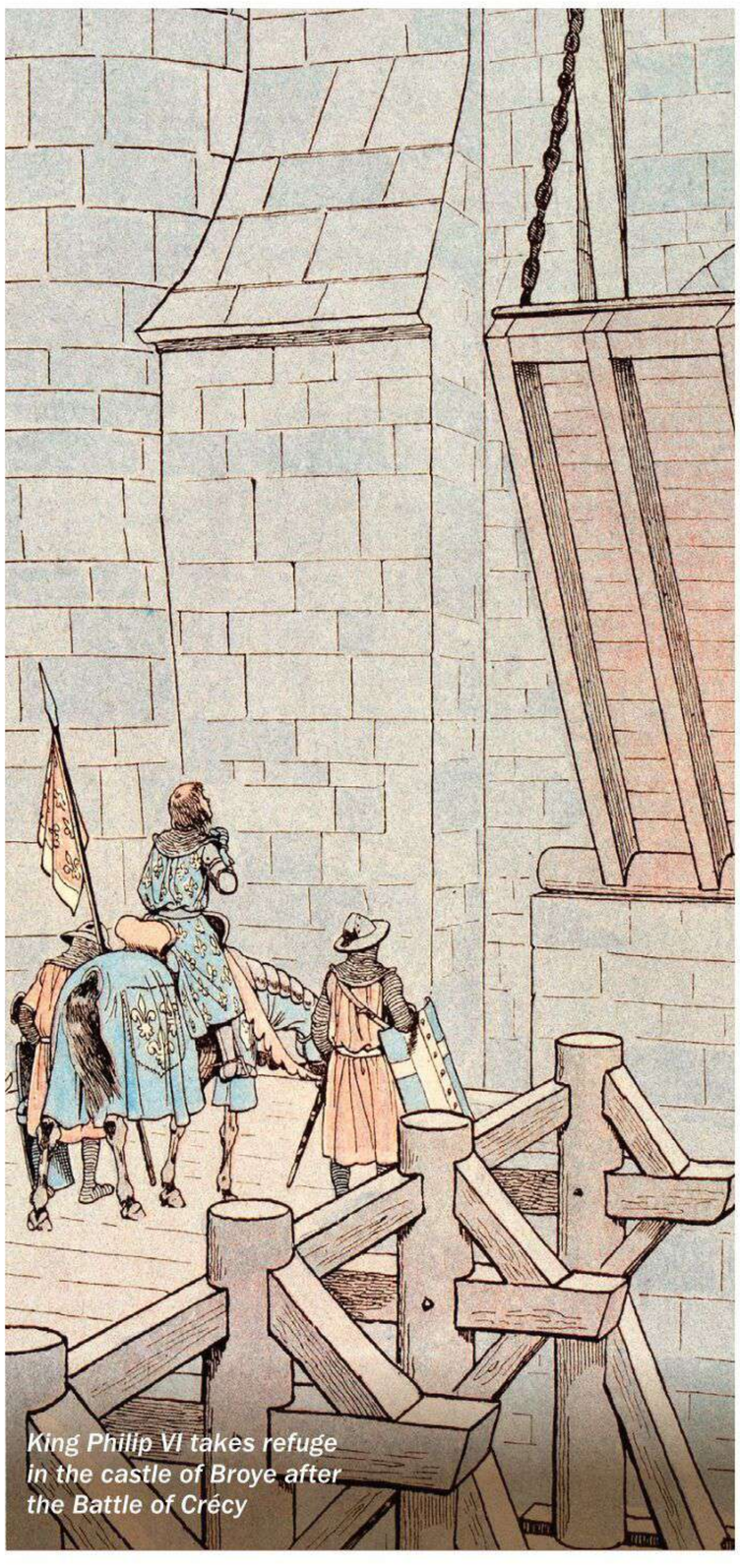
The English inflicted another serious defeat on the French at the Battle of Crécy in August 1346 and then laid siege to the port of Calais. In July 1347, Philip led his army towards the city intent on its relief. However, Edward's positions were strong, and in August Philip withdrew, allowing Calais to fall into English hands, where it would remain for the next 200 years. These major setbacks prompted the Estates, a representative assembly, to refuse to assess taxes to continue support of the war effort. Philip's grand plan for a retaliatory invasion of England was thwarted.

Historians suggest that Philip VI expired from fatigue, the result of continually fulfilling his marital duties to his young wife, who was pregnant when he died



Within months, the Black Death roared into France from Eastern Europe. Roughly one-third of the country's population died in the pandemic, which lasted until 1353. The effects of the plague were widespread. The labour and military forces reduced significantly in size, while production suffered and economic inflation spiralled out of control. An attempt to freeze prices succeeded only in further destabilising the French economy.

Philip became estranged from his own son, John, and much of the French nobility following the death of his queen, Joan of Burgundy, in 1349. In January 1350, he married the beautiful Blanche of Navarre, 40 years his junior, who had previously been engaged to John. Seven months later, Philip VI was dead at the age of 57, and with his passing, France remained in turmoil.



King Philip VI takes refuge in the castle of Broye after the Battle of Crécy

THE CATALYST

Territorial and personal rivalries so soured relations between Edward III and Philip VI that it took only a small spark to start the longest war in European history

Words by Derek Wilson

The war was caused by long-standing territorial conflicts exacerbated by the personal clash of two kings who were belligerent, violent, choleric and ambitious. When Edward inherited the English crown from his murdered father he was 15 years of age. He formally – but reluctantly – did obeisance to Philip as his feudal lord for his land in Aquitaine. He was anxious to cast off this dependence, which made efficient government of his inheritance difficult. Philip was equally concerned to establish direct control of agriculturally rich Aquitaine.

As for the Aquitainians – they consistently played off one master against the other. But that wasn't the only cause of dissension – another was Scotland. Edward claimed to be the feudal overlord of King David II and just as Edward's involvement in his mainland territories angered Philip, so Philip riled Edward by supporting and encouraging the Scottish king.

Added to these tensions were the conflicts of French and English fleets in the English Channel. Within a very short space of time, the rivalry had become so bitter that the two men were taking every opportunity to irritate each other. In 1334, Philip gave refuge to David II who was fleeing from Edward. For his part, Edward backed an anti-French faction in Brittany and maintained fortifications on the Breton coast. By 1337, both rulers were looking for an excuse for war.

The immediate catalyst was Robert d'Artois. This nobleman and half-brother of Philip's wife had been a strong supporter of the Valois takeover but subsequently fell out with the king over his criminal activity in attempting to secure his claim to hereditary lands.

He employed a forger to create false documents but was exposed and forced to flee. He ended up in England, where he not only enjoyed Edward's protection but provided him with vital political information aimed at doing as much damage as possible to Philip. To what extent Edward was already committed to claiming



A statue commemorating Jacob van Artevelde stands in a square in Ghent, Belgium

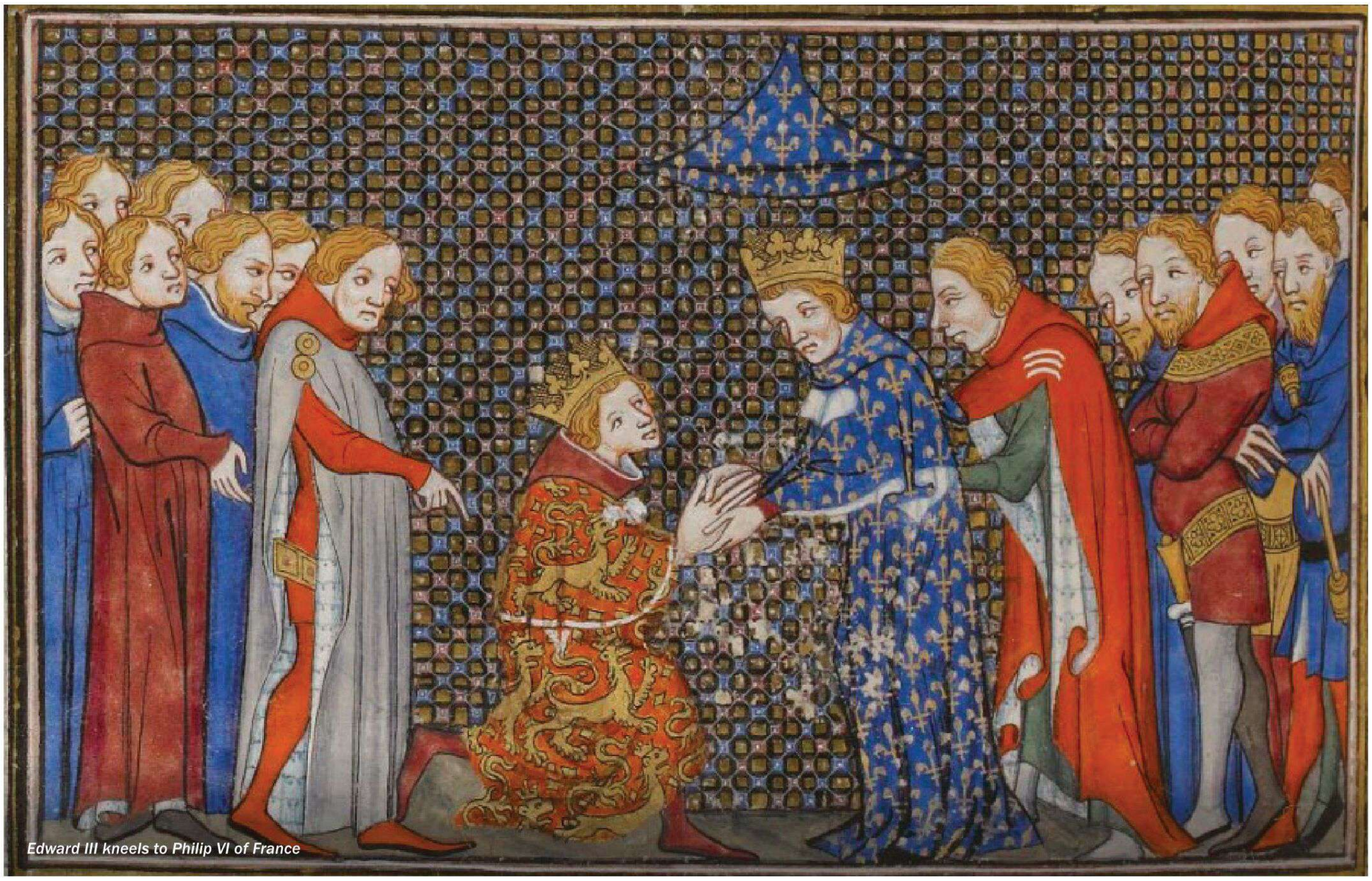
Edward's allies in the Low Countries

In 1337, the area now occupied by northern Belgium was divided between the duchy of Brabant and the counties of Flanders and Hainault. Flanders was economically as important to England as Aquitaine. What wine was to the one, cloth was to the other.

Flemish weavers were the master textile craftsmen of their day. They imported wool from England and exported cloth back across the Channel, throughout Europe and even as far as the Orient. The major towns of the region – Antwerp, Ghent, Brussels and Bruges – were the leading commercial centres north of the Alps. Here lived not only wealthy merchants, but also representatives of national and international banking houses – the men who lent money to kings, enabling them to fight their wars.

Both sides wanted the support of these principalities and Philip put pressure on his feudal vassal the count of Flanders. But in 1339, a bourgeois revolt led by Jacob van Artevelde forced the court to flee as he gave his support to Edward.

Edward's queen, Philippa, was the daughter of William I, Count of Hainault, and the English king had the support of his in-laws. The duke of Brabant dithered but eventually pledged troops to Edward. These agreements, together with the support of Robert d'Artois, provided Edward with an excellent base for the first phase of the war.



Edward III kneels to Philip VI of France



The trial of Robert d'Artois in the presence of King Philip VI of France

the French throne is not clear but it is certain that Robert encouraged him to take this step. Philip, however, made the decision easy. Claiming that Edward had broken his oath by succouring the enemy of his overlord, he declared Aquitaine forfeit and sent troops to occupy it in May 1337.

> *"HE WOULD HAVE TO CONVINCE THEM THAT HIS CAUSE WAS JUST"*

Edward could simply have landed his own army on the Gascon coast to recover his territory, but there were two problems with that plan. The first was that his military resources were far inferior to Philip's – to face the French king in open battle, he would need allies. In order to persuade other monarchs to help him, he would have to convince them that his cause was just.

Religion was a vital component of the chivalric code and it was widely believed that God would only grant victory to the side that was fighting a 'just war'. According to the rules of chivalry, appeals for and against a feudal overlord could only be sustained if that overlord was in violation of feudal law. What breach of the chivalric code could Edward lay at Philip's door? Philip had usurped the French crown that was Edward's by right. Edward launched a vigorous propaganda campaign to support his claim.

Sincere though his potential allies might be in considering the holiness of the cause, they did also have more pragmatic considerations to bear in mind. Philip was a powerful neighbour and not one to be provoked without a reasonable prospect of military success. To be set against that were the possibilities of profitable pillage and ransom, which were legal perks in a just war.

Edward's invasion force crossed the Channel in July 1338 and made its base at Louvain. He summoned a council attended by most of the rulers in the region and much hard bargaining went on but Edward's decisive victory at Sluys proved to be a clincher. Edward's disadvantage in manpower was now offset by the strategic benefit of obliging Philip to divide his forces to face enemies in the northeast and the southwest.

The English king probably didn't envisage a war to the death that would leave him undisputed ruler of the whole of France, but he now felt able to break Philip's resistance and force important concessions. He could not have imagined that his regnal descendants would be fighting the same war five generations later.

THE WAR AT SEA

Edward III and Philip VI's dispute over the crown of France spilled into the seas separating their kingdoms, and a bitter duel for control of the shipping lanes ensued

England was a kingdom that was split from its territories on the European continent by the sea. Yet when the Hundred Years' War erupted in 1337, having and maintaining a navy was still very much a secondary consideration for both of the main belligerents.

Naval engagements had been ongoing since before 1337 as French-licensed pirates would routinely harass English merchant ships that were trading with the Low Countries and territories in France. This only increased after the start of the war, when more French galleys began to join the raids, while English pirates also started to ply their deadly trade.

Edward III maintained a small royal fleet but in times of war he exercised his feudal right to requisition merchant vessels and refit them into warships. They were transformed by the additions of a forecastle, aftcastle and crow's nest, which all acted as platforms for archers to rain down deadly volleys of arrows upon the enemy. The English vessels were predominantly cogs – large, high-sided boats with a single great square-rigged sail. Among the English ships were some of the largest that were afloat at the time.

The monarch was able to call upon a large pool of merchant vessels as overseas trade had flourished and ports were awash with merchant ship all along the English coastline. Edward and his subordinates could impress those boats at little short-term cost, although the long-term effects on the economy eventually turned out to be ruinous. France could not muster anywhere near as many merchant

vessels as French trade across the sea and King Philip VI's control of his coast were both limited. Instead, they mainly relied upon galleys – fast, sleek ships that were powered by oars and a fore-and-aft sail. They were light, slim and low in the water but significantly faster and more manoeuvrable than the English cogs. King Philip had also hired mercenary galleys from Genoa and Spain to bolster and maintain his naval forces.

Ships were used at the time as either transports to conduct surprise raids on the enemy coastline or as floating platforms. The enemy boats would be approached, grappled and pulled closer, where men-at-arms would fight hand to hand, as they did on land. The larger, heavier vessels had a distinct advantage in naval engagements but the swift galleys could perform raids with devastating effect.

The opening exchanges on the seas favoured the French, and they conducted raids along the English coastline and on the Channel Islands. Portsmouth was devastated and Southampton

"THE ENGLISH NAVY WAS HAMPERED BY DIVISIONS AND RIVALRIES"

was burned to the ground. Guernsey, a vital protector of the Channel shipping lanes, was taken, as were the Christopher and the Edward, two of the largest ships afloat, in 1338. This certainly helped the French war effort as English resources were destroyed and their forces were tied up all along the coast, unable to resist any further raids and incapable of invading France. It also damaged the English economy and cut supply and reinforcement lines.

By 1340, Edward decided to act – the damage from French raiding and the threat of the French fleet to any attempt to ferry a large army to the continent warranted a strong response. He set about requisitioning more merchant vessels, travelling to various ports to garner support. The English Navy was hampered by divisions and rivalries, especially between the Northern fleet and the Cinque Ports, but Edward was able to draw the various forces together. Eventually, he marshalled a fleet of some 150 ships, although estimates of the total differ greatly.

The ships were packed with mariners, men-at-arms and archers equipped with longbows. By mid-June they were ready to sail. Headed by Edward himself, the fleet made for Sluys in Flanders, which was then a prosperous trading port. The French armada, numbering perhaps 200 vessels, had taken up a strong defensive position outside the port to assist the French land troops invading the Low Countries and to prevent English intervention.

Edward III managed to commandeer ships from England's Cinque Ports in return for trading privileges

Edward sent scouts to ascertain the French positions and attempt to rally local support. They found the enemy fleet drawn up into three lines, with the biggest ships positioned at the front and each line tethered together to provide mutual support should a boat be boarded. However, this surrendered any ability to manoeuvre and handed the English the initiative – they could move, attack, withdraw or sit off of the French ships and shower them with volleys of arrows.

But French admirals Quiéret and Béhuchet were confident that the size of their force alone would be enough to deter the English. Among the fleet were Castilian and Genoese mercenaries, the latter of which were under the command of Egidio Boccanegra, otherwise known as 'Barbavera' or 'Blackbeard'. He pushed for the flotilla to head out to sea but this strategy was refused.

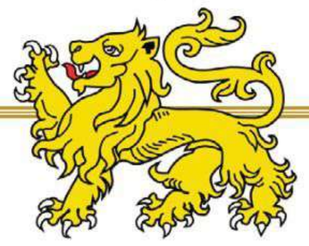
No Flemish support was raised by the English scouts, either because the Flemish had decided that the enterprise was unlikely to succeed or because they simply didn't have time to muster their forces. Undeterred, Edward insisted on a direct attack, trusting that his archers could deal a significant amount of damage to the French crews and even the odds.

On 24 June 1340, Edward's fleet set out to close with the French flotilla, which was slowly drifting outside the harbour at Sluys in the Zwin estuary. Edward's largest ships headed to the front and managed to turn their enemy's immobility to their benefit. The tall, heavy ships engaged the front line, raining arrows from their elevated positions down onto the French vessels.

While the French tried to retaliate with their crossbows, the English held several key advantages. At this point, the English longbow was far superior to the crossbow as it could be fired far much more accurately and rapidly – possibly as much as four times as fast. The English fleet also had the sun behind them, so the French struggled to see the enemy archers high in their boats. Moreover, the French galleys in the second and third lines were sitting low in the water, giving the upper hand to the taller English ships.

After raining arrows down upon the enemy, the English vessels grappled France's and boarded them, where brutal hand-to-hand fighting ensued. Warfare on the sea was even more ferocious than the already-bloody land battles of the time as there was no opportunity to turn tail and run – and only those worth ransoming were taken prisoner. Those deemed to be unprofitable faced unenviable options: either face being stabbed and thrown overboard, or simply tossed overboard to sink. If any were strong enough to swim to the shore, they were unceremoniously beaten to death by vengeful locals. This goes a long way to explaining the exceedingly high casualty rates of naval engagements of the period.

It was reported that none of Philip VI's courtiers dared to inform him of the French defeat at Sluys, leaving it instead to the court jester



The fighting continued into the afternoon but the English superiority soon began to show and the French front line suffered considerable losses. More ships pressed into the fray, and the French second and third lines were set upon by the marauding English fleet. The tide of the battle was clearly with the English and, upon realising this, Barbavera took his Genoese galleys and made

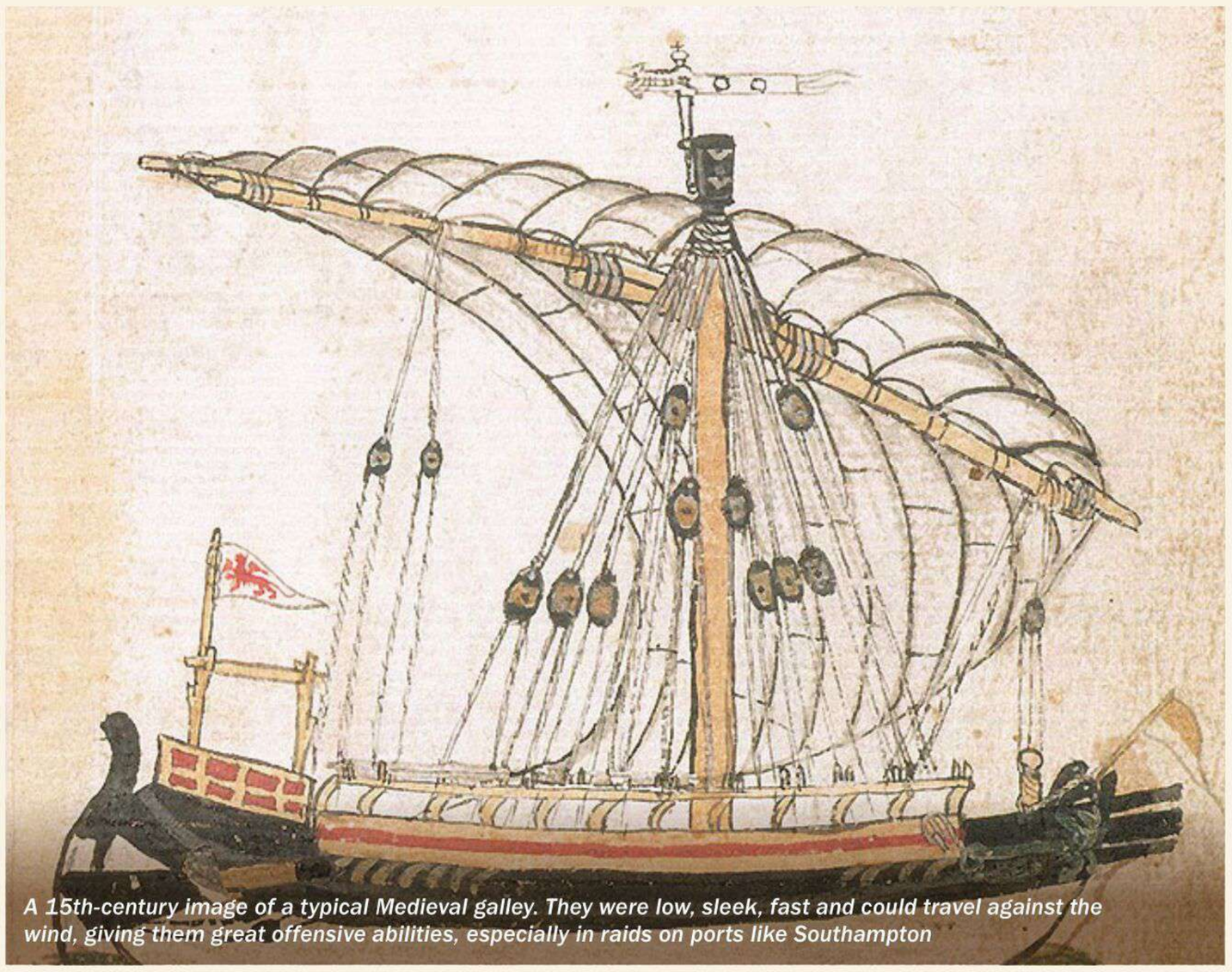
Raid on Southampton

The bustling port of Southampton was a major centre of trade in Medieval England, where stores of wine, wool and goods of all kinds passed through in significant numbers.

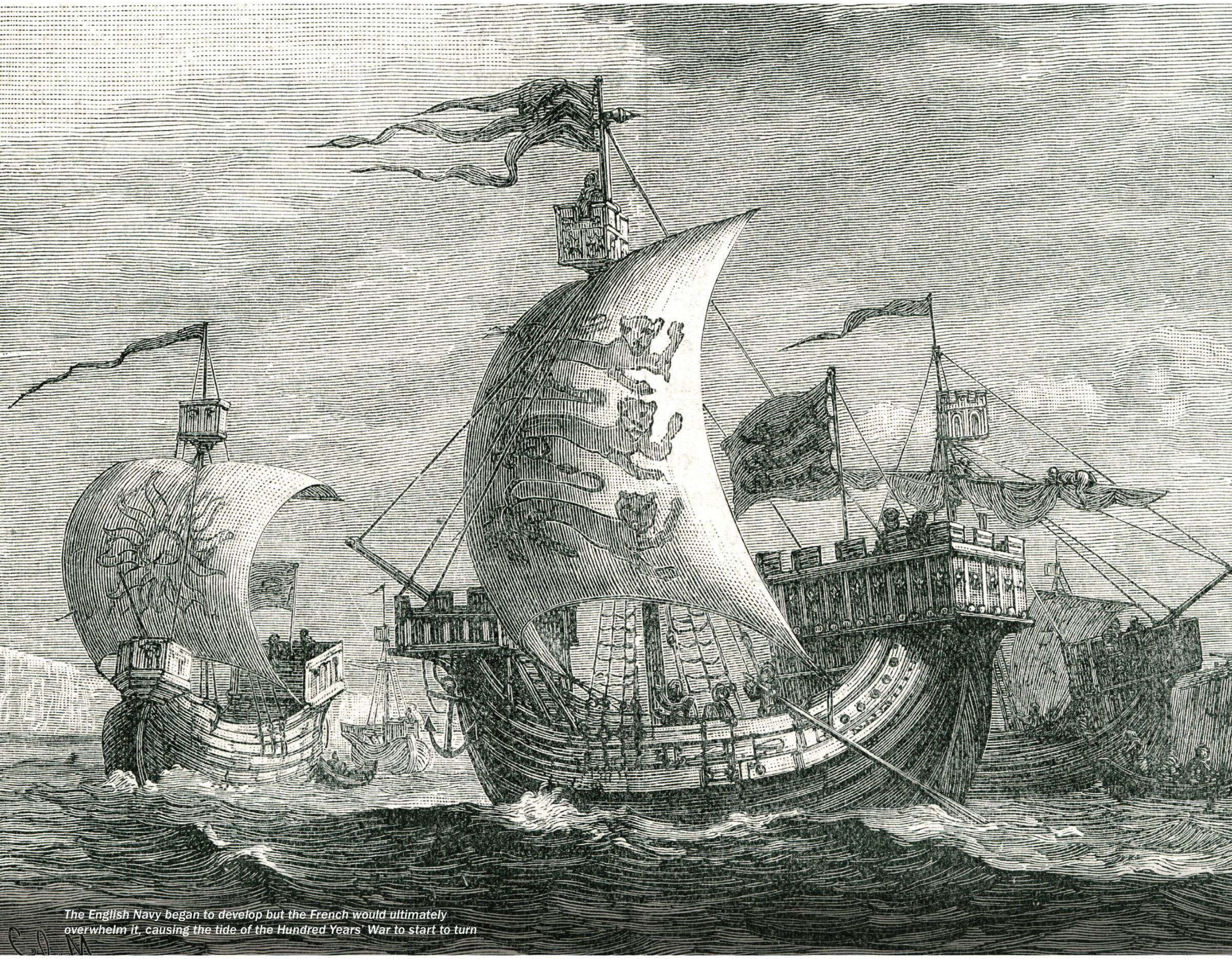
The town was only partially enclosed in a wall, and a garrison huddled in a castle that had been in place since Norman times. By 1338, the walls were crumbling and were nonexistent in the south and west of the town. The town leaders had neglected the defences for years – now their idleness came back to haunt them.

On 4 October 1338, 50 ships filled with Norman, Castilian and Genoese men cruised towards one of the major ports of England and landed by West Quay, which was undefended. Taken by complete surprise, most of the town fled – those who weren't so swift of foot were raped, killed or enslaved. The town was thoroughly looted and burnt to the ground before an English force could be mustered to repel the raiders the next day.

This attack was typical of the French policy of raiding and destroying English trade and resources and stretching England's military power. The swift galleys could row against the wind and strike anywhere on the coast without fear. Until the Battle of Sluys, it had proved an effective strategy.



A 15th-century image of a typical Medieval galley. They were low, sleek, fast and could travel against the wind, giving them great offensive abilities, especially in raids on ports like Southampton



The English Navy began to develop but the French would ultimately overwhelm it, causing the tide of the Hundred Years' War to start to turn

an escape, managing to capture two English ships in the process.

As evening fell, men from Sluys and other harbours along the Zwin estuary poured out and attacked the French galleys from the rear. When evening slid finally into night, the surviving French vessels belatedly attempted to escape with little success.

By the end of the battle, the devastation to the French flotilla was huge – of its 200 ships, as many as 190 were lost. But the human cost was even greater: 18,000 men in French service were killed – although, as always, different accounts suggest different numbers. Contemporary sources in particular enjoyed exaggerating the number of dead, attributing a higher human cost to a greater victory.

"THE FIGHTING CONTINUED UNTIL THE AFTERNOON BUT THE ENGLISH SUPERIORITY BEGAN TO SHOW"

Among the casualties were the two French commanders: Quiéret died in the battle while Béhuchet was unfortunately hanged shortly after being captured. The English, however, only lost two ships in the fight, although the human cost on their forces was also significant. Even King Edward himself had been wounded in the leg in the skirmish.

Sluys was a comprehensive victory for Edward and gave England control over the prized shipping lanes. The nation enjoyed several years of mastery of the sea but the French rebuilt their fleet and parity was restored in the following years.

While it was a devastating defeat, it proved to be far from fatal for Philip VI and the French cause. England's continued reliance upon merchant vessels for warfare, meanwhile, ultimately harmed the war effort by damaging the economy.



DEFINING BATTLE

CRÉCY

THE SHALLOW VICTORY

Edward III won one of the most spectacular victories in European warfare but failed to capitalise on it

Words by Derek Wilson

It was not until 1346 that Edward III and Philip VI clashed personally in battle. Both kings were hampered from waging all out war by a shortage of funds and involvements with other military commitments. They also had to contend with parliaments who had little enthusiasm for expensive warfare.

When the French and English armies confronted each other on 26 August 1346, two elements came into play that would decide the outcome – the ancient concept of chivalry and new developments in military technology.

Chivalry had its roots in Christian idealism and in the hierarchic ordering of society. The mounted knight was a member of the ruling classes. He wore armour, fought with lance and sword, practised his skill in tournaments and, theoretically at least, conducted himself honourably in war and peace. With his fellow knights he formed a formidable fighting elite, the charge of the Medieval cavalry being a force that frequently swept all before it. The knights looked down on their battlefield companions, who were comprised of archers, pikemen and others who fought with a variety of swords, axes and whatever else they could bring to the fray.

However, the etiquette of war was being changed by the development of new, more effective weapons, particularly the longbow and the crossbow. The code of chivalry had no place

for such implements, which could kill at long range. War was held to be the pursuit of brave men facing each other in hand-to-hand combat. The Battle of Crécy would pit the two styles against each other. Medieval warfare would never be the same again afterwards.

In 1344, Edward held a great tournament at Windsor attended by most of the feudal magnates of the realm and their retinues. This major chivalric display was intended to unite England's military elite behind an expedition to France. Ostensibly this was to make good his claim to the throne, but it is likely that the proposed invasion was aimed at forcing Philip to relinquish all pretensions to Aquitaine. This lavish display, together with sermons and other anti-French propaganda and the prospect of loot, attracted an unusually large fighting force of 4,000 men-at-arms and 10,000 archers, as well as infantry from Wales and Ireland and mercenaries hired from Edward's Flemish allies.

"THE ETIQUETTE OF WAR WAS BEING CHANGED"

In July the army made landfall on the Normandy coast near Caen and rampaged through the countryside, plundering at will. According to John Froissart, court chronicler to Edward's queen, Philippa of Hainault, the sight of the English army raised fear and panic among the citizenry: "When the inhabitants saw the English battalions approaching, with all their banners and pennons flying in the breeze and heard the archers roaring… they ran from the town in disorder… falling over each other in their haste."

Edward's army continued northeastwards, accumulating hundreds of cartloads of booty. Philip, meanwhile, had assembled a much larger army ready to prevent the expected English attack on Paris. If that was Edward's objective, he now had to abandon it and make for the coast in order to ship his men and plunder back safely across the Channel. Realising that he would have to fight the pursuing French, he chose an excellent defensive position on a ridge with his flanks protected by the towns of Wadicourt and Crécy-en-Ponthieu and the River Maye.



Sound battle tactics would have prompted the French king to encircle his enemy, cutting off his route to the coast ports and forcing him out into the open field, where the French army, numbering some 30,000 strong (12,000 men-at-arms, 12,000 infantry and 6,000 crossbowmen) would have made short work of the invaders. Instead, he committed a series of blunders.

The first was his decision to camp too far from the battle zone, forcing his men to arrive at Crécy after a tiring march. He then made the misjudgement of sending his crossbowmen ahead to 'soften-up' the enemy, but their weapons lacked the necessary range to do much damage. Philip then compounded these errors by ordering the customary charge of mounted knights, before having second thoughts and opting to delay.

The cavalry leaders – the flower of French chivalry – either had not received or chose to ignore the king's orders. Believing in their own superiority as fighting men, they thundered up the long slope towards the enemy lines with the sun in their eyes. This rash manoeuvre saw them riding over their own crossbowmen, whom they treated with contempt as low-born, foot-slogging amateurs. The impetus of their charge was thus impeded by their own men, whom they had no reservations about cutting down.

Now Edward loosed his longbowmen. Their arrows, capable of travelling some 200 metres,



rained down on the French. While Philip's men were trying to extricate themselves, the English advanced, but not in a downhill charge of armoured knights. The archers went first, efficiently maintaining rapid fire. They were followed by the men-at-arms on foot: their horses would have been an encumbrance in the hand-to-hand battle now developing.

The slaughter was prodigious. In fighting that continued until nightfall it is estimated that at least 13,000 French and allied troops perished, including the pride of France's chivalrous nobility. As for the victors, not only were their losses minimal (probably no more than 300), but their humble foot soldiers, armed with nothing more sophisticated than weapons fashioned from rustic tools, were as effective as dismounted knights.

"IN FIGHTING THAT CONTINUED UNTIL NIGHTFALL 13,000 TROOPS PERISHED"

Warfare was changing, but it would take time for military commanders to adjust their thinking. Edward was too involved in counting the profits of victory (spoils and the ransom of rich captives) to follow and destroy Philip's fleeing host or to make for the scantily defended capital. He continued his march to the coast and eventually reached Calais, the best embarkation port for his purpose. But the townsmen put up a determined resistance, and it took 11 months to starve them into submission.

Calais provided Edward and his successors with a base that proved vital throughout the remainder of the war. The king could – and did – boast of his great victory. In celebration he founded a new order of chivalry in 1348 – the Knights of the Garter. However, by then he and his adversary had something else to worry about – the Black Death.

BATTLE OF CRÉCY

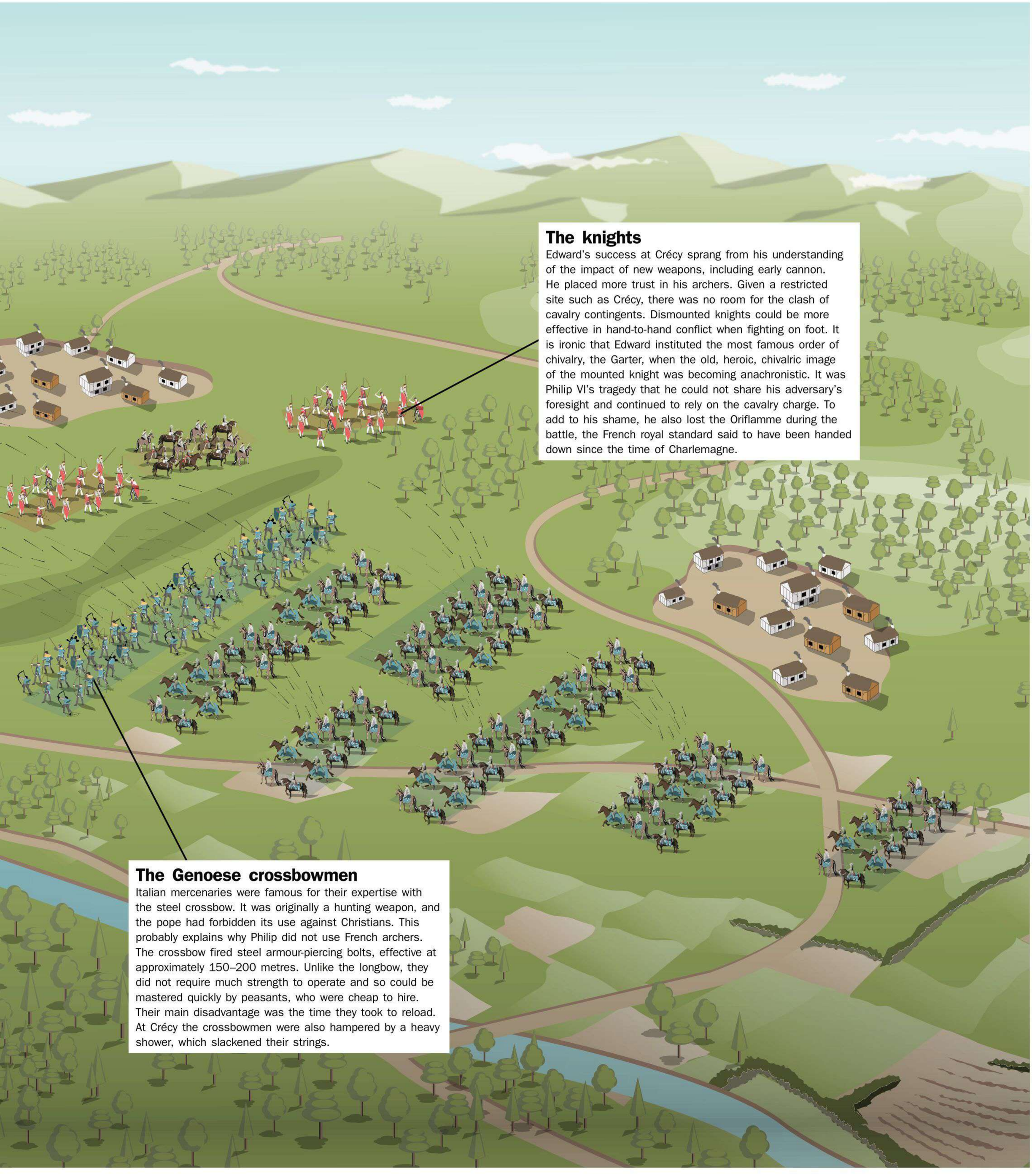
How Edward's archers helped to carry the day

The English bowmen

These men formed a proud, professional military corps. They were trained, proficient and slick at keeping up rapid fire. Longbow range was about the same as that of the crossbow, but they could discharge about five missiles to the crossbow's two. When the rain fell at Crécy, the English archers removed their bowstrings and put them under their jerkins to keep dry.

The site of the battle

Edward III had time to select a good vantage point to face the superior forces of the French. The ridge between the villages of Crécy-en-Ponthieu and Wadicourt overlooked a slope flanked on the right by the River Maye and on both sides by woodland. He used a windmill at Crécy to obtain a good view of the action. In order to engage, Philip VI would be forced to advance through the narrow gap between Fontaine and Estrées, then attack uphill.



The knights

Edward's success at Crécy sprang from his understanding of the impact of new weapons, including early cannon. He placed more trust in his archers. Given a restricted site such as Crécy, there was no room for the clash of cavalry contingents. Dismounted knights could be more effective in hand-to-hand conflict when fighting on foot. It is ironic that Edward instituted the most famous order of chivalry, the Garter, when the old, heroic, chivalric image of the mounted knight was becoming anachronistic. It was Philip VI's tragedy that he could not share his adversary's foresight and continued to rely on the cavalry charge. To add to his shame, he also lost the Oriflamme during the battle, the French royal standard said to have been handed down since the time of Charlemagne.

The Genoese crossbowmen

Italian mercenaries were famous for their expertise with the steel crossbow. It was originally a hunting weapon, and the pope had forbidden its use against Christians. This probably explains why Philip did not use French archers. The crossbow fired steel armour-piercing bolts, effective at approximately 150–200 metres. Unlike the longbow, they did not require much strength to operate and so could be mastered quickly by peasants, who were cheap to hire. Their main disadvantage was the time they took to reload. At Crécy the crossbowmen were also hampered by a heavy shower, which slackened their strings.

KEY PLAYER

EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE

The eldest son of Edward III was a hero whose charisma may have outweighed his accomplishments

Words by Derek Wilson

Jean Froissart has left two verdicts of Edward, Prince of Wales. The chronicler described him as a ruthless military commander who devoted himself to violence and pillage. For example, he recorded how, "influenced with passion and revenge", Edward mercilessly ordered the slaughter of over 3,000 inhabitants of Limoges, including women and children, in 1370. However, after the Black Prince's death, Froisssart lauded him as "the Flower of Chivalry of all the world."

There is truth in both assessments. War is a dirty business and military heroes cannot avoid being soiled by it – that's why the Black Prince remains something of an enigma, hailed as both a national champion and a thug.

We don't even know how Edward came by his nickname of the Black Prince and it didn't occur in chronicles till long afterwards. Some suggested that it described his appearance or character. Others thought it referred to the colour of the armour he wore at the Battle of Crécy.

Edward was the oldest son of Edward III and his queen, Philippa of Hainault. His father deliberately reared him for a military career so that he would play an important part in the ongoing conflict with France. But the prince was a dutiful son. The motto he chose for his coat of arms – 'Ich Dien', or 'I Serve' – indicated his filial devotion and he spent almost all his mature years on campaign.

"CRÉCY PROVED TO BE THE BLACK PRINCE'S BAPTISM OF FIRE"

He had only just turned 16 when he sailed to Normandy with the army that harried the province and went on to inflict a crushing defeat on the French at Crécy and to capture Calais. Crécy proved to be the Black Prince's baptism of fire. He was given command of the English army's right wing, supported by veteran commanders, but when the ranks of Genoese crossbowmen facing his position began to crumble, Edward showed his inexperience by leading his contingent downhill to engage in hand-to-hand fighting.

For the French, the count of Alençon seized the opportunity to launch a mounted counter-charge. Edward was briefly surrounded and in danger of being killed or captured. An urgent message was sent to the king asking for reinforcements to rescue his son. The reply that came was, "As long as the prince is not wounded there will be no succour. We will not deprive him of the honour of victory."

The Battle of Poitiers

A defeat rather than a victory

The second famous battle that enhanced the Black Prince's reputation was a conflict between (according to modern estimates) 6,000 English and 11,000 French troops. The result was determined more by the incompetence of King John II than by brilliant tactics on the part of Prince Edward.

However, we do need to remember that Medieval close combat was a confusing business in which slight misunderstandings and errors of judgement could have devastating consequences. Edward did not want to fight a superior force in open battle – in pre-conflict negotiations, he offered generous, even humiliating, terms to buy off the enemy.

Knowing the strength of his position, John rejected these overtures. The delay, however, enabled Edward to make the most of his defensive position. He stationed his men in an area of hedged orchards flanked by woodland and waited for the enemy to take the initiative. John had his knights advance on foot (perhaps learning the lesson of Crécy) but they were encumbered by their armour and the arrows of the English longbowmen.

When they reached the English position, Edward's mounted knights crashed through hedges. The French vanguard fell back only to become entangled with the next wave of attackers. Edward's cavalry now waded into the confused melee while a contingent carried out a flanking movement on the French left. King John was captured and his men fled, leaving some 2,500 dead on the field.



Edward was the prince of Wales and Aquitaine before his death



Throughout his life, Edward proved himself to be a fierce and loyal fighter

Despite this, the king's second-in-command, Geoffrey Harcourt, called upon the rearguard for help and the Black Prince may well have owed his life – or, at least, his honour – to their intervention. After this campaign, Edward was one of the knights to be invested with the Order of the Garter at its institution in 1348.

In 1355, Edward's father appointed him as his deputy in Aquitaine. From henceforth, most of the prince's life was spent on campaign, defending his continental possessions, although his military activity amounted to little more than plundering expeditions. These had the dual objectives of enriching and securing the loyalty of his Gascon lords and depriving the French king of valuable revenues, thus weakening his overall position in the war with England.

Edward's first foray lasted eight weeks and took him far to the southeast, towards the Gulf of Lyon. His army of over 6,000 men attacked farms, villages and towns, inflicting considerable distress on countrymen unable to resist them and amassing considerable booty. They wasted no time investing well-defended citadels, such as Carcassonne, and no French force came out to meet them in pitched battle.

The 1356 campaign began in July and Edward headed north with the intention of aiding his father's forces fighting in Brittany. As before, his men only exerted themselves where there were easy pickings, burning and plundering scantily defended towns and villages. However, the prince did capture the castle of Vierzon.

By this time, the French king, John II, had been stirred to action. He assembled a sizeable army and blocked the crossings of the Loire. Edward, therefore, turned south in order to regain the safety of his own country. He was hotly pursued by the French host and was eventually forced to prepare for battle near Poitiers. There, against all the odds, the Black Prince not only won a battle, he captured King John.

The humiliation and the loss of hundreds of France's leading men threw the kingdom into civil unrest and, though peace negotiations were long and difficult, Edward III was able to impose swingeing terms on his adversary at Brétigny in 1360. Aquitaine was hugely enlarged and granted to Prince Edward outright without the need of fealty to King John as overlord. For his part, Edward renounced his claim to the French crown. This marked the end of the first phase of the Hundred Years' War.

The Black Prince was granted Aquitaine and Gascony as a personal fief held under the English crown. But in 1367, in answer to an appeal from his father's ally, Peter of Castile, he led an army over the Pyrenees. Peter had been deposed by his half-brother, Henry, and turned for aid to the commander who was already a legend in his own time.

Edward chose to be buried at Canterbury Cathedral instead of the traditional Westminster Abbey. While no one really knows why, it's thought to be to atone for his sins

Edward defeated Peter's rival in open battle and made him secure on his throne. But for Edward, the campaign was a personal disaster. He and his men were kept waiting in the baking summer heat of Valladolid, short of food and ravaged by dysentery, waiting in vain for the money Peter had promised to pay for his assistance. The bulk of the Black Prince's men never reached home and Edward was seriously weakened by disease.

He was not allowed to enjoy his territory in peace, for a new French king, Charles V, reopened hostilities. Several towns went over to Charles and it was the Black Prince's angry punishment of one of them, Limoges, which involved, according to Froissart, such savage reprisals. Edward was, by now, too weak to take to the field in person. He returned to England in 1371 where he died five years later at the age of 46.



Edward was apparently named the Black Prince after the Battle of Crécy

KEY PLAYER

JOHN II

Failing to stabilise the French nation, King John II was often impetuous and prone to ill-advised initiatives

At times during the near-14-year reign of King John II of France, the nation lingered on the brink of chaos. The son of King Philip VI, he ascended the throne on 22 August 1350, and reigned, at times in absentia, until his death at the age of 44 on 8 April 1364, while a guest of the English.

John married at the age of 13 in the summer of 1332 and was proclaimed Duke of Normandy, a prosperous province that enjoyed a tremendous degree of autonomy from the Crown and maintained close economic ties with England. He represented his father at the coronation of Pope Clement VI in Avignon and participated in negotiations with English King Edward III during the early years of the Hundred Years' War. His queen, Bonne of Luxembourg, with whom he fathered several children, succumbed to the Black Death in 1349. Five months later, he married Joan I, Countess of Auvergne.

Soon after taking the throne, John demonstrated that he was relatively incapable of ruling effectively. He surrounded himself with corrupt advisors who enriched themselves at the expense of the national treasury and vied for favour with the King, who often showed preferential treatment to a chosen few. Gangs of robbers roamed the French countryside, sowing unrest among the people, and his efforts to quell the crime wave by organising a crusade to the Middle East came to nothing. The King was regularly at odds with King Charles II of Navarre, his cousin and son-in-law, and struck a pair of uneasy bargains with his relative in the treaties of Mantes in February 1354 and Valognes in the autumn of 1355. Neither one would last.

Meanwhile, the Hundred Years' War erupted once again. In the summer of 1355, Edward III perhaps sensed an opportunity with the court of John II in disappary. He appointed his son, Edward, the Black Prince, as the king's lieutenant in Gascony. With this new title and the prestige that went with it, the Black Prince set sail for France, and in October he began his 'great raid' across the enemy land.



King John II ennobles several knights; he established the Order of the Star as an honoured assembly

For all his efforts, John II was only able to pay about 400,000 crowns, or just over 13 percent, of his ransom to the English

By the end of 1355, the Black Prince had disbanded his great force, though it was reunited once more in the closing months of summer in 1356. Once again, the Black Prince launched a scond raid, burning and pillaging with impunity.

However, by the autumn of 1356, John had raised an army that was significantly larger than that of his English enemy. The Estates-General – the legislative body that bore responsibility for taxation and appropriated funds for the ensuing expedition – allowed the formation of an army, but only on the condition that French soldiers were prohibited from looting across their route of march. It was a troubling commentary on the perceived ability of the King to maintain discipline or display leadership.

King John was frail and rarely engaged in jousting, hunting or strenuous physical activity. Nevertheless, he was confident that his large army would prevail against the English. Sometime earlier, perhaps in grudging admiration of his foe, he had established the Order of the Star, similar to England's Order



John's funeral procession nears the Basilica of Saint Denis. The King died at the age of 44

of the Garter. He drew his substantial army up at Poitiers in west-central France, intending to attack the Black Prince, who was in a precarious position with extended supply lines and eroded combat efficiency after an extended campaign. When a lengthy parlay failed to produce a satisfactory bargain, both sides prepared for battle.

After instructing over a dozen knights of his personal guard to dress identically as he had, King John led his third division into the fray and fought with remarkable courage while wielding a large battleaxe. Despite overwhelming numbers, the French were soundly defeated at the Battle of Poitiers on 19 September 1356. The King lost his helmet in the fray, and was quickly recognised by Denis de Morbecque, a French exile fighting with the English, who demanded, "Sire, I am a knight of Artois. Yield yourself to me, and I will lead you to the Prince of Wales."

The debacle at Poitiers was a turning point in the reign of John II. Taken to England, he was held for ransom. However, he enjoyed captivity such as it was, given the freedom to travel about the country and to receive luxuries imported from France. While John evidently delighted in relaxed imprisonment, his son, the future Charles V, acted as regent in Paris and found himself embroiled in both domestic unrest and foreign uncertainty. Charles managed to quell an uprising known as the Jacquerie in 1358 and two years later concluded the Treaty of Brétigny, which set King John's ransom at the staggering sum of three million crowns and required a host of hostages – including his second son, Louis of Anjou – in exchange for his freedom.

John was permitted to return to France in order to raise his ransom, but it was a painfully slow exercise. John's captive son, Louis, grew tired of being a hostage and, in 1363, he escaped from imprisonment in English-held Calais. The King appeared publicly shamed by such an act of dishonour. He was well behind in his ransom payments and pronounced that he would return to "captivity" in England "to maintain the royal honour which his son had sullied". At least, that was John's story. Some have speculated that he possessed little talent and even less desire to govern France during a period of turmoil, although he established the franc as the national currency and attempted to stabilise the erratic economy.

King John arrived in England for the second time in January 1364 and was welcomed with great celebration. He often visited Edward III and resided again in luxury at the Savoy Palace in London. The festivities, though, were short-lived. The French king became ill and died of an unknown cause three months later. His body was returned to France and interred at the resting place of French monarchs in the Basilica of Saint Denis.

Rather than bringing order to a country in social and economic upheaval, John II left a legacy of chaos and confusion. However, he is remembered as a patron of the arts and an advocate for the development of the first standing army in France. His son, Charles V, fared much better and is revered for restoring much of the lost honour and prestige of the House of Valois.

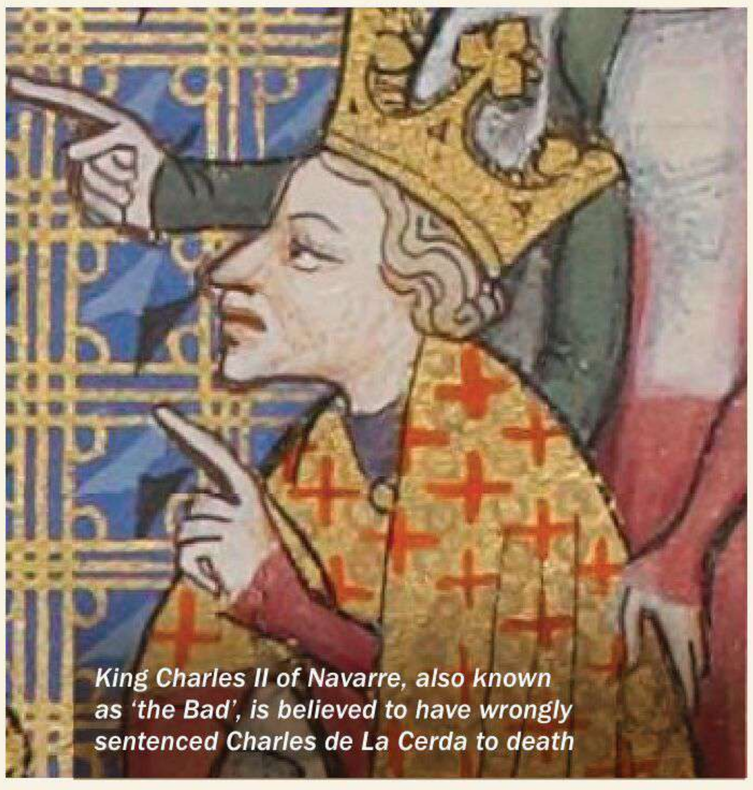
Questionable motives

One of the first acts of John II as King of France brought unrest and mistrust to his court

Shortly after King John II ascended the French throne, he ordered the execution of the Constable of France, Raoul II of Brienne, Count of Eu. The charges against Brienne are unclear, although after his capture by the English he may have pledged the county of Guînes, a French territory in northern France, in exchange for his release.

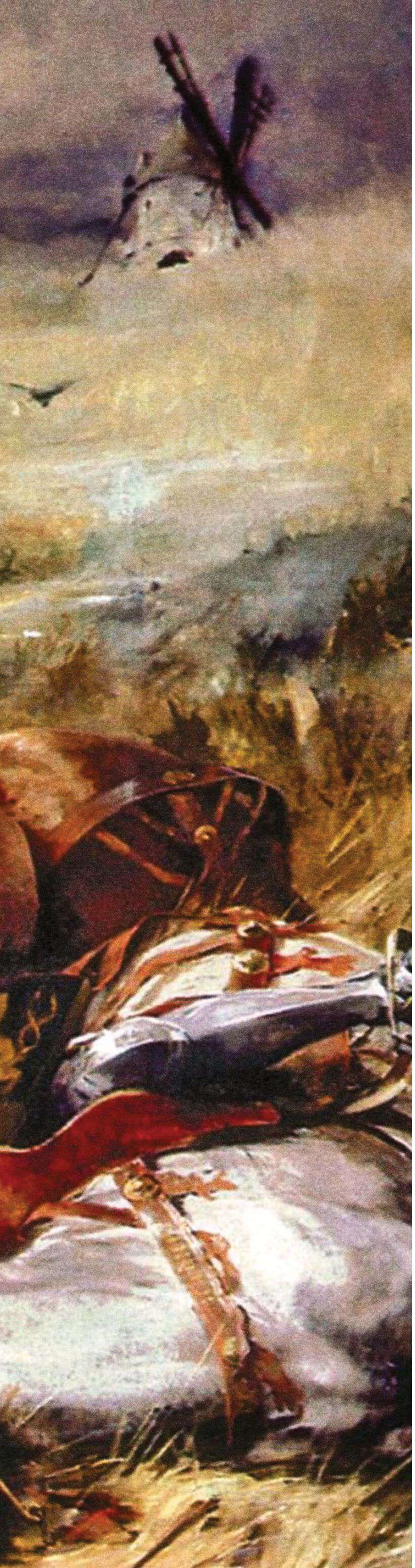
In itself, the execution of Brienne might not appear so unusual, particularly if the charge is accurate. However, the appointment of the King's close friend Charles de La Cerda to the post calls his motive into question. It has been speculated that John and Charles may have maintained a homosexual relationship. Their closeness was evident, as the new constable accompanied the King on official journeys away from the court and was awarded the title Count of Angoulême.

King Charles II of Navarre is said to have also claimed that title, bitterly resenting De La Cerda and leading conspirators in the constable's murder in 1354.



King Charles II of Navarre, also known as 'the Bad', is believed to have wrongly sentenced Charles de La Cerda to death





THE PRINCE IN BATTLE

Known to history as 'The Black Prince', the eldest son of Edward III was a renowned military commander, with a reputation for chivalry, as well as a penchant for mass destruction and calculated violence

On the evening of 19 September 1356, the heir to the throne of the England entertained the King of France in his tent, near the town of Poitiers in western France. However, this was no ordinary royal meeting. The king had been captured on the field of battle and was at the mercy of one of the most legendary figures in Medieval history. Although he was only in his mid-twenties, Edward, Prince of Wales, was at the pinnacle of his military career. His life personally symbolises the first half of the Hundred Years' War, when England fought for the right to wear the French crown.

Edward, along with his father and namesake Edward III, epitomises the martial glory of the initial English victories and gained a reputation for courage and chivalry. However, Edward is known to history as 'The Black Prince', and, in many ways, his conduct in France was coldly brutal to those who denied their allegiance to him. His life was a contradictory mixture of idealistic heroism versus barbaric terror.

Born in 1330, Edward was brought up to be a soldier. In the Medieval world the ideal king had to be a warrior and Edward III wanted his son to be in military training from an early age. At the age of seven, Edward had already been equipped with a complete suit of armour and in the same year the conflict that would become known as the Hundred Years' War began. Prince Edward would spend the rest of his life vigorously, and sometimes controversially, fighting his father's cause and his military career began in earnest at the age of 16.

Winning his spurs

In July 1346, Edward III's army landed unopposed in France at La Hogue. The following day the king knighted Prince Edward to mark the beginning of his career as a soldier. The prince immediately exercised his rights to create other knights and in the subsequent march across Normandy the vanguard was nominally under his command. The French caught up with the English on the north bank of the River Somme and Edward III selected a site near the village of Crécy in order for the opposing forces to give battle.

The English numbered between 9-12,000 men but were fighting a French army of about 30,000 under King Philip VI. Edward III deployed his men in defensive order on a hill with archers and two divisions in the front, and the king's division forming the reserve.

Prince Edward was in the centre of his men, surrounded by his household knights and two earls. Although the French and Genoese soldiers



King John II (centre left, in white) fought bravely at Poitiers but was ultimately captured and presented to Prince Edward. The king would die in captivity in England with his huge ransom unpaid

were continually harassed by English longbows, the brunt of the hand-to-hand fighting fell on Prince Edward's men.

Young Edward was in the thick of the fighting from the outset, and many stories are now attached to his conduct. It was reported that the Duke of Alençon, who led the first French charge, beat down the prince's standard just before he was killed.

A second French charge penetrated into Edward's division and the prince was in considerable personal danger, with some saying that he was forced to his knees and captured by the Count of Hainault before being rescued by his standard-bearer Sir Richard Fitz-Simon. In what would normally have been a serious breach of discipline, Fitz-Simon had to lower his banner in order to defend the prince.

One of the most famous stories concerns the messenger sent to Edward III at the moment of crisis to request help for the prince. The king reputedly replied, "Let the boy win his spurs." When Edward III eventually sent 20 knights to rescue his son, he found the prince and his men resting and leaning on their swords, having successfully repulsed the French attack.

"WHEN EDWARD III EVENTUALLY SENT 20 KNIGHTS TO RESCUE HIS SON, HE FOUND THE PRINCE AND HIS MEN RESTING AND LEANING ON THEIR SWORDS, HAVING REPULSED THE FRENCH ATTACK"

Prince Edward's courage during his first major engagement at the Battle of Crécy impressed his contemporaries. According to legend, he honoured the memory of the slain, blind King John of Bohemia by adopting his personal badge of three feathers as his own, which is still the symbol of the Prince of Wales today.

There was, however, a contrasting response to the knightly bravura. According to a Hainault chronicler, when Edward III asked his son what he thought of going into battle it is reported that the prince, "said nothing and was ashamed". If this account were, in fact, true, then it would be at odds with Edward's later behaviour.

Clash on the waves

After Crécy, the French signed a truce with the English that was prolonged by the outbreak of the deadly Black Death. By the summer of 1350 the war was resumed.

"ACCORDING TO LEGEND, HE HONOURED THE MEMORY OF THE SLAIN, BLIND KING JOHN OF BOHEMIA BY ADOPTING HIS PERSONAL BADGE OF THREE FEATHERS AS HIS OWN, WHICH IS STILL THE SYMBOL OF THE PRINCE OF WALES TODAY"

English plans for an Anglo-Castilian marriage alliance involving Edward's sister Joan fell apart when she died of the plague. The French seized this opportunity to encourage the Castilians to send a large fleet to harass shipping in the English Channel.

By July 1350 the English had assembled a fleet at Sandwich and in mid-August a Castilian host was off Winchelsea. Both Prince Edward and his father embarked on 28 August and on the next evening the two fleets engaged. The English rammed and boarded Castilian ships, before the crews clashed on the decks. In the fray, the king's ship was sunk and Edward III had to scramble aboard a Castilian ship. Similarly, Prince Edward's ship was sinking when his brother John sailed alongside and rescued him. The battle was a fierce contest, but ended with the retreat of the Castilians at twilight, with the remainder being captured by the English.

Afterwards the king and his sons anchored at Winchelsea and Rye and conscripted horses from the towns to convey the news to Queen Philippa. It is recorded the royal family spent the night revelling and recounting tales of the day's fighting, which appears to be a coldly decadent contrast to the maritime slaughter that had taken place only hours before. Edward III made much of his naval victory and the new coinage of 1351 reflected his claim to be the 'King of the Sea' with the martial monarch shown to be standing in a ship. As for Prince Edward, the fight at Winchelsea only served to enhance his warrior reputation, which would increase in the years ahead. His career would also begin to be tainted by an increasing harshness in his conduct of the war in France.

Le terrible Prince Noir

Final truces with France ended in the mid-1350s and Prince Edward was granted his own theatre of

The Garter

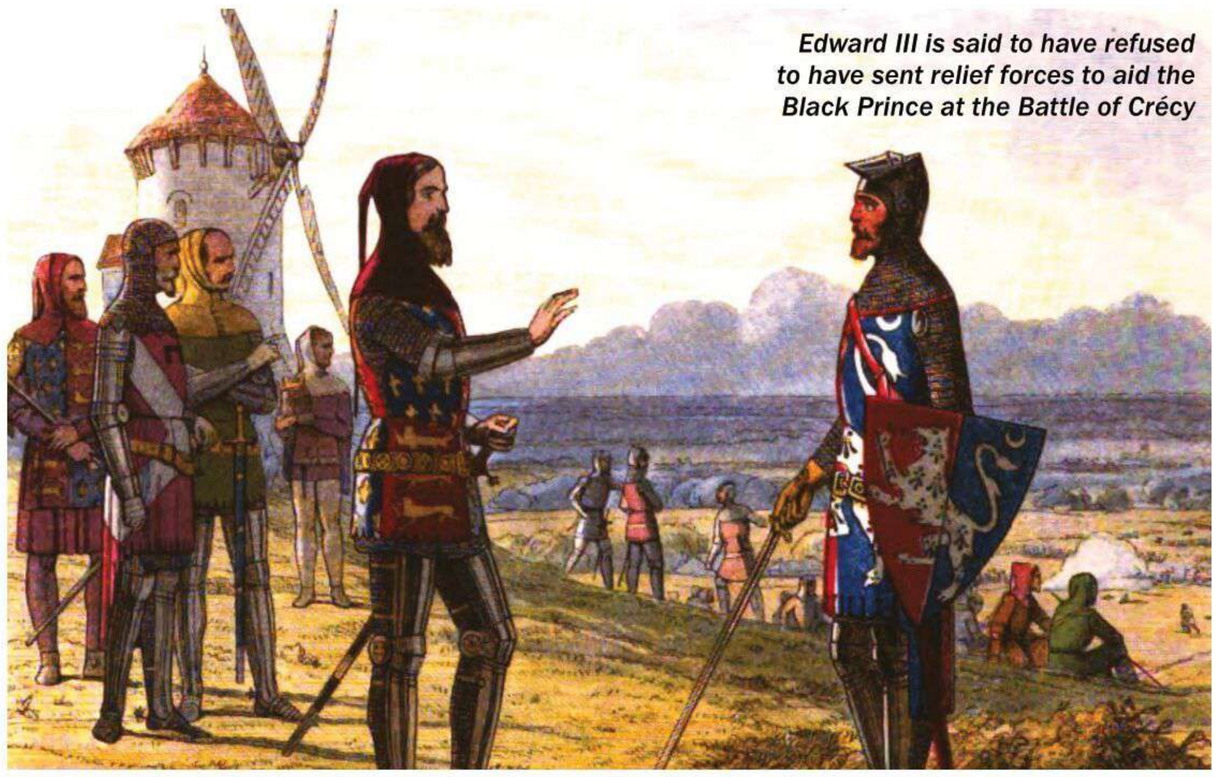
The Prince of Wales helped to found one of the United Kingdom's most prestigious honours

Prince Edward was actively involved in the foundation of the Order of the Garter in what is usually accepted as 1348. Today it is the third most prestigious honour that the British state can award after the Victoria and George Crosses, with membership numbers always capped at 24 Companions. It has a reputation for epitomising the chivalric knightly ideal but its foundation was grounded much more in the power politics of the time. The Order was designed to bring together the inner circle of Edward III's military commanders in France, who also happened to be his companions in the jousting arena. Some of the earliest records of the Order's existence come from Prince Edward's wardrobe accounts. In December 1348 Edward's wardrobe keeper bought 24 garters that were given to the first knights at an unspecified date. At the home of the Order in Saint George's Chapel, Windsor, one of the sets of facing stalls was designated for Edward III, the other for Prince Edward.

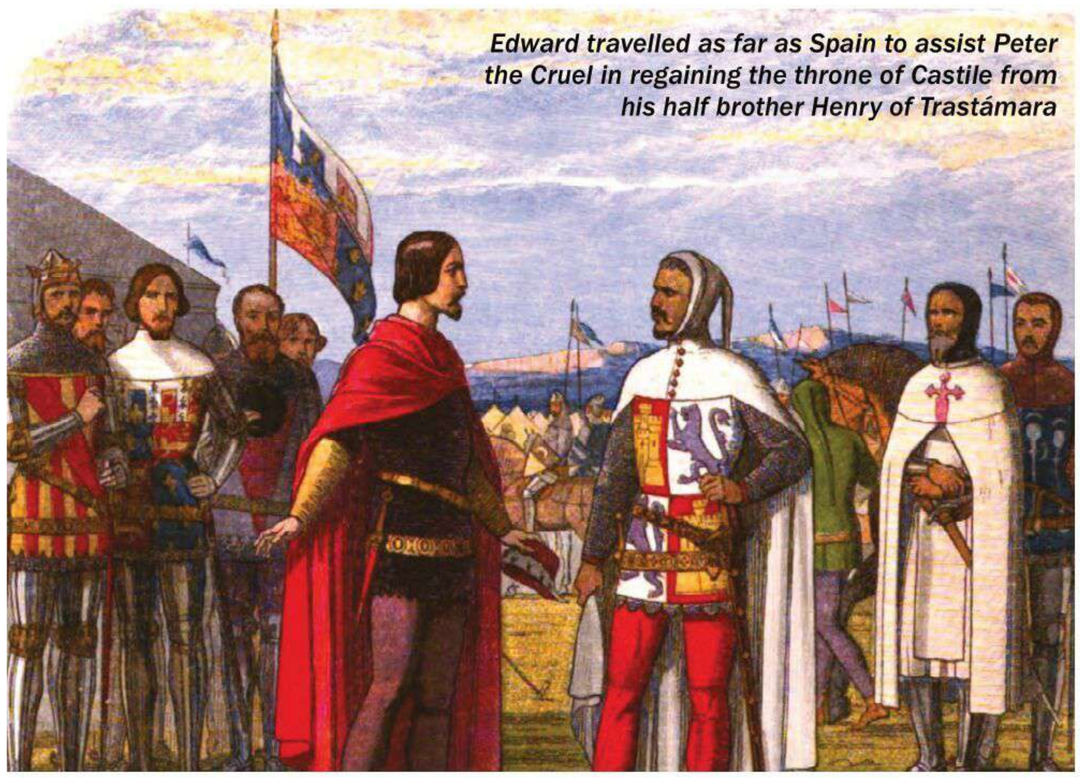
The reason for the Order's foundation is generally accepted as being political, which is reflected in the choice of heraldry and motto. On the Order's badge the gold and blue of France is combined with words that refer to the English claim to the French throne, 'Shame on him who thinks evil of it'. The romantic origins for the Order were invented in later years and have no basis in reality. Indeed, the Order was effectively an official celebration of the English victory at Crécy and cemented the companionship of the king, prince and nobles who had taken part. The choice of the garter itself possibly originated in a tournament badge, particularly as it had the practical advantage that it could be worn outside armour.



Below: Prince Edward was one of the founding members of the Order of the Garter



Edward III is said to have refused to have sent relief forces to aid the Black Prince at the Battle of Crécy



Edward travelled as far as Spain to assist Peter the Cruel in regaining the throne of Castile from his half brother Henry of Trastámara



The 1355 chevauchée deliberately laid waste to much of southern France and the Black Prince sacked many towns including Carcassonne

"IT WAS EFFECTIVELY A FORM OF AUTHORISED TERRORISM, AND WAS USED THROUGHOUT THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR, WITH EDWARD HELPING TO LEGITIMISE THIS WANTON DESTRUCTION"

operations in Gascony, which at that time was an English possession. The prince was enthusiastic and wrote that he, "prayed the king to grant him leave to be the first to pass beyond the sea." He formally sailed to southwest France with full powers to administer English territories there. He also received a military contract of service, which made provisions for events such as the capture of 'the head of the war' (i.e. the main French commander) and the Black Prince's own possible capture.

Edward landed at Bordeaux on 20 September 1355, and his combined Anglo-Gascon army of 6-8,000 men set out on 5 October with the aim of conducting a 'chevauchée' – a raid designed to weaken the enemy's supplies and prestige by deliberately burning and pillaging towns and villages. It was effectively a form of authorised terrorism, and was used throughout the Hundred Years' War, with Edward helping to legitimise this wanton destruction.

The Prince's target in 1355 was the lands of Jean d'Armagnac who had been appointed by John II of France to put pressure on English territories. Once his army reached enemy lands on 10 October, it moved into three columns and spread out to live off the land and a fortnight was spent ravaging d'Armagnac lands. The army even had portable bridges to increase the range of the pillaging. Edward then moved into Languedoc and was able to inflict considerable damage on local towns, including the town of Carcassonne, which he seized and burned.

By 8 November he had reached the furthest point of his march at Narbonne on the Mediterranean shore where the town was taken despite fierce resistance – but its castle held out. Edward returned to friendly territory on 27 November, having not once engaged the French in open battle. The French had deliberately avoided him, making them appear hesitant and thereby giving the prince a propaganda victory.

The chevauchée was a nightmare for the people of southern France. At Montisgard it was recorded that men, women and children were slaughtered indiscriminately and this was a scene repeated across the region. In the 19th century, carbonised remains of burnt grain could still be found in the ruins of Montbrun-Lauragais and it was said that even the Pope feared for his safety at Avignon. It is likely that Edward's famous nickname originates from this raid – in the parts that he passed through he was known as 'le terrible Prince Noir'. The damage was such that well into the 20th century there was a local oral tradition among peasants who related stories about a figure known as 'L'Homme Noir' who had passed by with an army in the Middle Ages.

The chevauchée also disrupted the economic productivity of the region and consequently the French ability to withstand English attacks was diminished. Edward's steward explained, "The countryside and towns which have been destroyed in this raid produced more revenue for the king of France in aid of his wars than half his kingdom." In December 1355, Edward justified the raid in a letter to the Bishop of Winchester: "We rode afterwards through the land of Armagnac, harrying and wasting the country, whereby the lieges of our said most honoured lord, whom the count had before oppressed, were much comforted." Edward was implying that the local nobility were grateful for his intervention but was apparently unconcerned about the suffering that his army committed. This coldness implies that Edward only reserved his chivalric behaviour for fellow members of the nobility.

Triumph at Poitiers

In August 1356, Edward launched another chevauchée into France from Aquitaine. He adopted a scorched earth policy as he advanced north to ease pressure on English garrisons in northern and central France, but was stopped at Tours when he failed to take the castle. At the same time, he heard that John II was marching south from Normandy to destroy his army at Tours, so Edward began to retreat back towards Bordeaux but the French king caught up with him near Poitiers. At this stage Edward offered to give up the loot his army had stolen in exchange for a safe passage but this was rebuffed. With no options left, Edward turned his Anglo-Gascon army of 6,000 men to face a French army of at least 20,000 on 19 September. He formed his army into three divisions with his archers on the flanks and retained his own division in the rear with an elite cavalry unit. Edward then arranged his men behind a low hedge for protection, with marshes to the left and wagons to the right.

King John arranged his own men into four 'battles' led by himself, the Dauphin, Baron Clermont and the Duke of Orléans. Both the Dauphin and Clermont attacked the English, but were swept back by hails of arrows and counterattacks by English men-at-arms. The Dauphin's forces then crashed into Orléans' approaching division, before running into John's division, causing confusion. Had the French not panicked at this stage, they could have routed Edward's men who were becoming exhausted and had started to collect their wounded. Instead Edward ordered his men to break cover from the hedge and charged the French while simultaneously launching his cavalry to flank the enemy. After a hard fight, the English stood their ground and the French line collapsed.

"IT WAS A HUGE VICTORY FOR EDWARD. AT A MINIMAL COST, 2,000 FRENCHMEN WERE KILLED WITH ANOTHER 2,000 CAPTURED INCLUDING THE BIGGEST PRIZE: KING JOHN"

It was a huge victory for Edward. At a minimal cost, 2,000 Frenchmen were killed with another 2,000 captured including the biggest prize: King John. He was brought to Edward's tent, where the prince served him and according to one chronicler said that John's personal bravery, "had outdone his own greatest knights". This was little consolation to John who was taken back to England in triumph. Edward was treated to a great procession in London, where the water conduits apparently ran with wine, while John wore a sombre black robe. He had good reason to; his capture had huge ramifications in France where his ransom was more than the yearly income of the country. Some said it was twice as much and John eventually died in English captivity, with his country in a broken state of anarchy.

Into darkness

Poitiers was the pinnacle of Edward's military career and he seemed ready to succeed his father as a powerful King Edward IV. He ruled Aquitaine as a semi-independent principality between the years of 1360-67 and won a further dramatic victory in Spain at Nájera in 1367, but after the Spanish campaign he became increasingly ill.

In a highly controversial incident at the Siege of Limoges in 1370, a now litter-bound prince ordered the sacking of the captured town. According to the chronicler, Jean Froissart, "It was a most melancholy business; for all ranks, ages and sexes cast themselves on their knees before the prince, begging for mercy; but he was so inflamed with passion and revenge that he listened to none, but all were put to the sword, wherever they could be found." This has since been highly disputed among historians, but whatever the truth, Limoges greatly stained Edward's reputation.

Prince Edward took part in the naval Battle of Winchelsea in 1350. The English victory encouraged Edward III to issue new coinage in 1351 depicting him as 'King of the Sea'



Edward died in 1376 and was buried in Canterbury Cathedral, the first Prince of Wales never to succeed to the throne of England

TREATY OF BRÉTIGNY

A humiliation for France, the Treaty of Brétigny brought peace for just a relatively brief period during the Hundred Years' War

The name 'Hundred Years' War' is something of a misnomer. The great conflict that lasted from 1337 to 1453 was actually a series of wars, each with its own discernible conclusion.

The Treaty of Brétigny was the agreement that ended the first phase of the Hundred Years' War. However, only nine years of restive peace followed, and the treaty was a tremendous humiliation for France, the nation considered to have been militarily preeminent on the continent of Europe. Drafted on 8 May 1360, the treaty was concluded at Brétigny, a village near the city of Chartres, after more than a month of difficult negotiations, and its terms were affirmed with the Treaty of Calais, which was ratified six months later on 24 October.

The treaty itself was a direct though prolonged result of the disastrous French defeat at the Battle of Poitiers, fought on 19 September 1356. Edward the Black Prince, son of English king Edward III, won a great victory over a much larger French army led into battle by King John II. The French king was captured and taken to England to be held for ransom, leaving his son, the Dauphin – who later became King Charles V – to assume the authority of regent in Paris.

The Dauphin was pressed not only by the constant threat of further English military action, but also by unrest in the streets of the French capital. This had been fomented by economic and social factors, and led to the brief but destabilising peasant uprising known as the Jacquerie. Charles believed that a settlement

For the English, after years of campaigning, the Treaty of Brétigny signified the high water mark of their expansion and influence on the European continent



The primary cause of negotiations leading to the Treaty of Brétigny was the shattering French defeat at the Battle of Poitiers





ABOVE Louis I, Duke of Anjou, failed to strike a bargain with the English for his release and escaped to France

LEFT King Edward III ruled England for 50 years, but when he died in 1377, his authority on the European continent had greatly receded

with the English was of primary importance in stabilising the situation, but the civil strife undermined his bargaining power with his adversary and contributed to the conclusion of a treaty with regrettable terms, at least from the French perspective. In the bargain, a massive sum of three million crowns, one that France would find impossible to pay, was settled upon for the ransom of King John II, who would be released once the first million was tendered. In addition, the guarantee of payment was based on the delivery of additional hostages to England, including two of King John's sons, John, Duke of Berry and Louis I, Duke of Anjou, along with two citizens from each of the 19 major towns and cities of France, two residents of Paris, and a number of other individuals of noble birth.

The English also received substantial territorial concessions, including no fewer than 15 provinces, regions or towns of greater France. Among these were Guyenne and Gascony, Calais, Limousin, Montreuil-sur-Mer and Ponthieu. Edward III would possess these territories and retain several islands just off the French coast, and none of them would be subject to tribute payments to the French crown as the islands and others had been previously. The noble title of Count of Guines was ceded with the town of Ham, and the countship of Gauré was also forfeited.

In return, Edward III renounced his claim to the throne of France, which had been a principal casus belli. He also relinquished control of the duchy of Touraine, Brittany and Flanders, and gave up a pair of countships – Anjou and Maine. The Channel Island of Alderney was returned to the administration of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Coutances after more than 130 years under English authority. England retained control of Aquitaine and saw the provisions of the Treaty of Brétigny as an enhancement to its provincial stronghold in the southwest.

The captivity of John II in England had hardly been oppressive as he was allowed to travel freely, import luxurious goods from France, and reside in splendid residences such as the Savoy Palace. Still, after four years, the sovereign came home to France to raise his own ransom. The task would eventually prove too great, and only a fraction of the full payment was ever made. Meanwhile, expecting to be detained for only six months, the Duke of Anjou became restless in the hands of the English and escaped.

Ratification at Calais

The kings of England and France met solemnly to affirm the Treaty of Brétigny after its terms were concluded

After months of preliminary discussion, King Edward III of England and King John II of France met at Calais in a solemn ceremony to pledge their adherence to the Treaty of Brétigny. The monarchs met at the Church of St Nicholas, walked up the steps together and knelt at the altar. Audoyn, abbot of Cluny and a papal envoy, conducted mass and then recited the treaty's tenets, with the bishops of Boulogne and Winchester at his side.

A short pause followed, and Edward then addressed John directly, saying: "Fair brother, I warn you that it is not my intention to be bound by this oath unless you on your part fully observe all the articles of the treaty." John nodded, swearing to do so. Edward followed. Moments later, a similar pledge was agreed by 24 French and 27 English barons and princes. In theory, the moment was significant. In practice, its impact rapidly faded. In less than a decade, the countries were again at war.

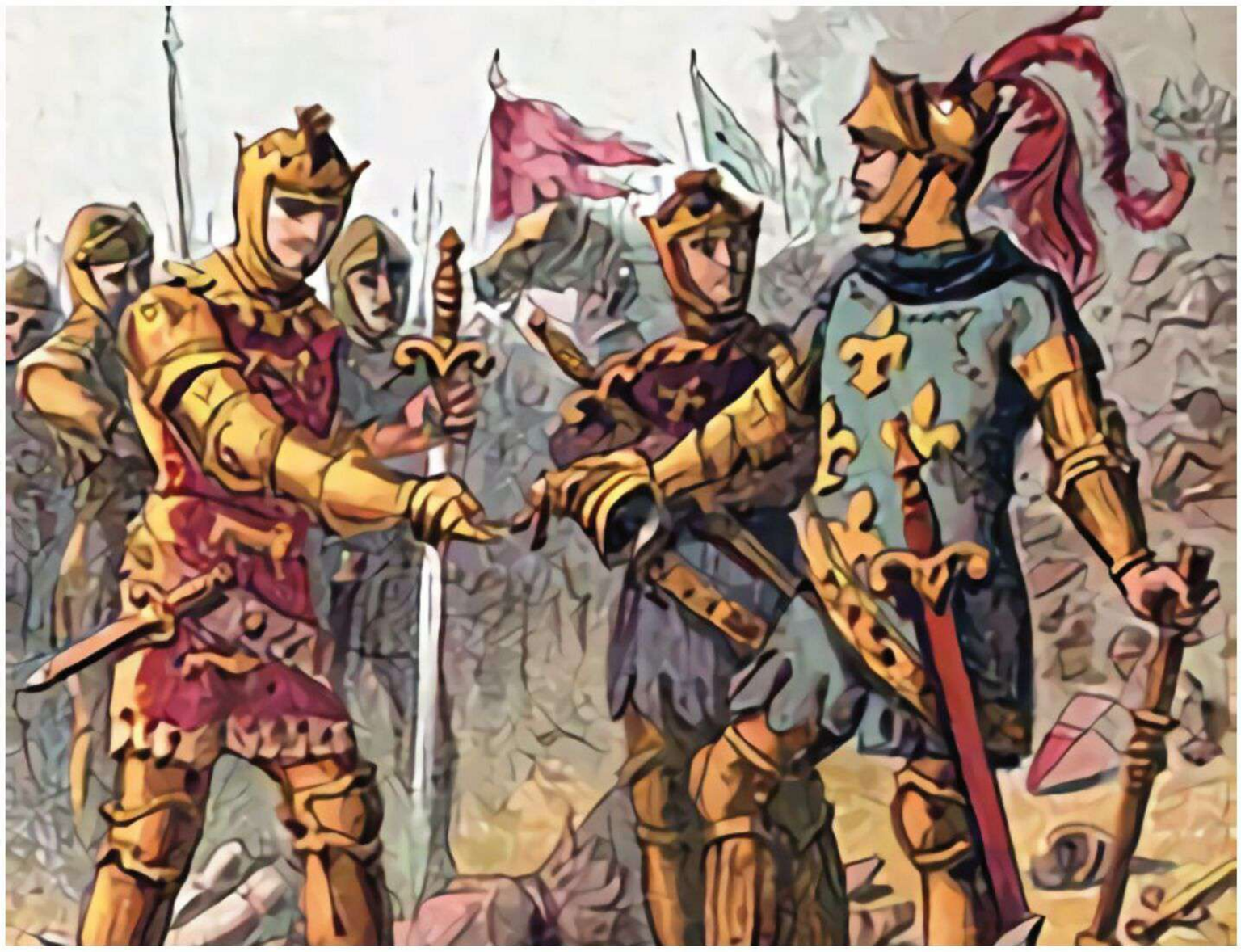


This ornate chest emblazoned with royal shields was fashioned to contain the Treaty of Brétigny following its ratification at Calais

John II considered this act of his second son to be dishonourable and determined that he should return to captivity in England to maintain the integrity of the House of Valois. In January 1364, John arrived in London with great fanfare as the people greeted him with feasts and revelry. Within a matter of months, though, the hostage king fell ill and died. His body was returned to France for interment at the Basilica of Saint Denis.

The Dauphin assumed the throne as King Charles V, and the embarrassment of the Treaty of Brétigny apparently spurred him to go to war once again on the pretext that the English had failed to fulfil their pledges made with its ratification. Specifically, the rule of the Black Prince in Gascony was believed to have become increasingly harsh, and he was summoned to Paris to respond to this concern. When the Black Prince refused to attend, Charles declared war in May 1369.

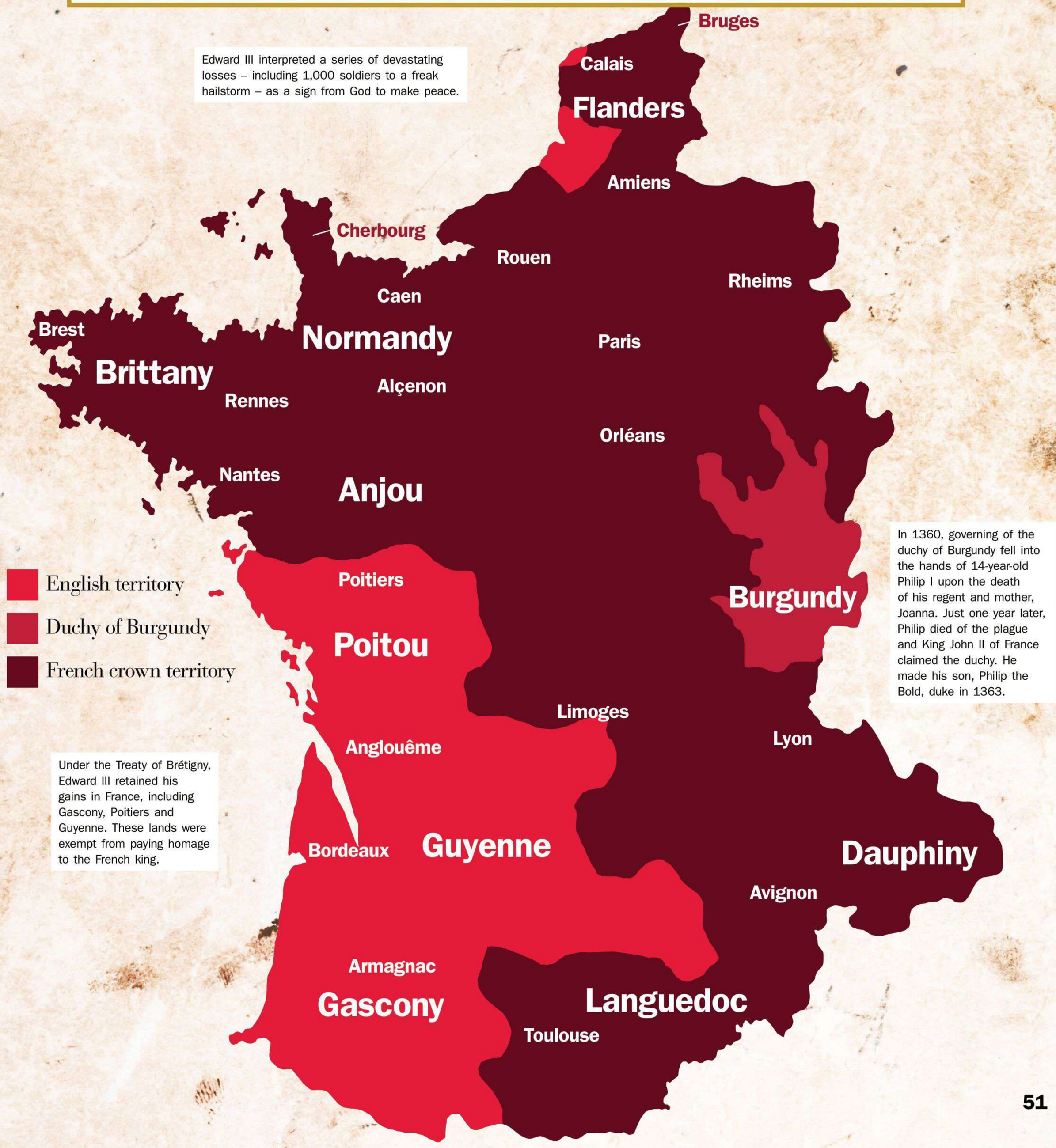
Under the capable leadership of Charles' lieutenants, the French army and navy regained the upper hand against the English. Edward III died in 1377, and by then the English had been forced to withdraw from much of their prior holdings on the continent.



STATE OF PLAY: 1360

At the time of the Treaty of Brétigny, it seemed that war was close to ending – but it proved to be a temporary respite and bloodshed soon reignited in France

Edward III interpreted a series of devastating losses – including 1,000 soldiers to a freak hailstorm – as a sign from God to make peace.



In 1360, governing of the duchy of Burgundy fell into the hands of 14-year-old Philip I upon the death of his regent and mother, Joanna. Just one year later, Philip died of the plague and King John II of France claimed the duchy. He made his son, Philip the Bold, duke in 1363.

Under the Treaty of Brétigny, Edward III retained his gains in France, including Gascony, Poitiers and Guyenne. These lands were exempt from paying homage to the French king.

CAROLINE WAR

When the Black Prince refused Charles V's summons in 1369, the French king declared war, reigniting the conflict for another 20 years

54 Charles V
How a mild and unassuming man managed to lead France from devastation to a miraculous recovery

56 Bertrand du Guesclin
The rise and rise of a French commander born in obscurity

58 War of the Breton Succession
England and France vied for control of Brittany, funding a brutal proxy war that ravaged the territory for years

62 The saviour of Castile
How events in the Castilian civil war determined the fate of the Hundred Years' War

66 The Battle of La Rochelle
England would see their military ambitions in France slide beneath the waves in this brutal naval clash

68 The death of the Black Prince
The death of Edward the Black Prince was a turning point in the history of both England and France

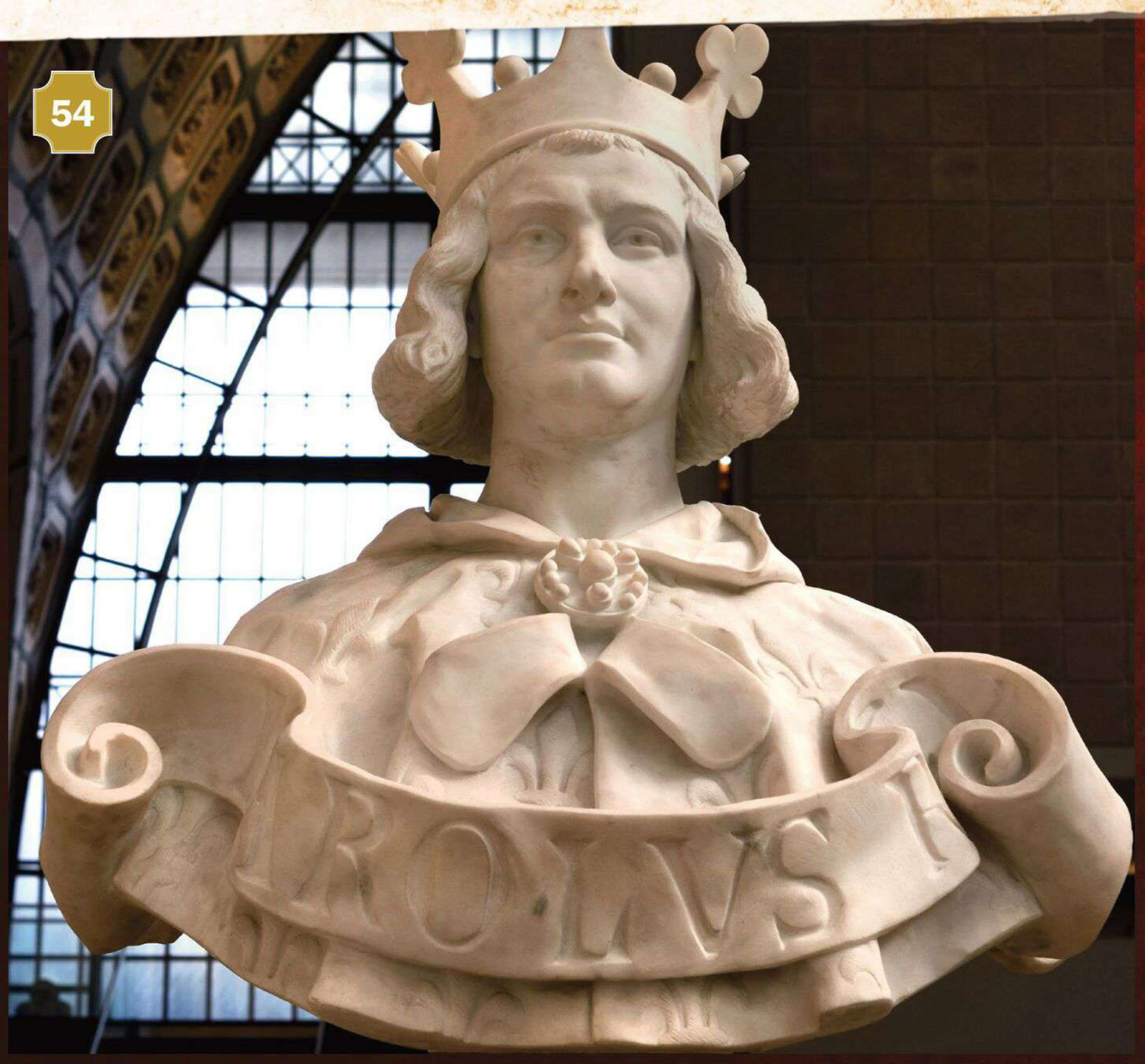
74 Richard II
The king whose thirst for revenge led to him losing his crown and his life

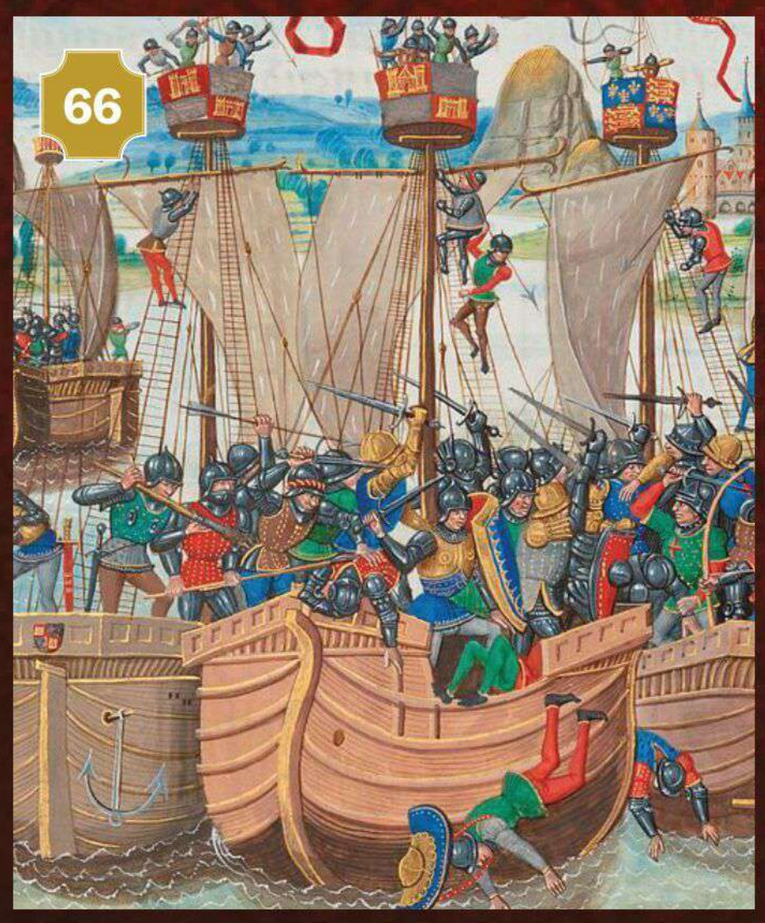
76 John of Gaunt
Wealthy, powerful and ostentatious, Edward III's third son could scarcely avoid being unpopular

78 The long peace
While England struggled with the Peasants' Revolt and France plunged into a war for the throne, both nations sought a temporary peace from war





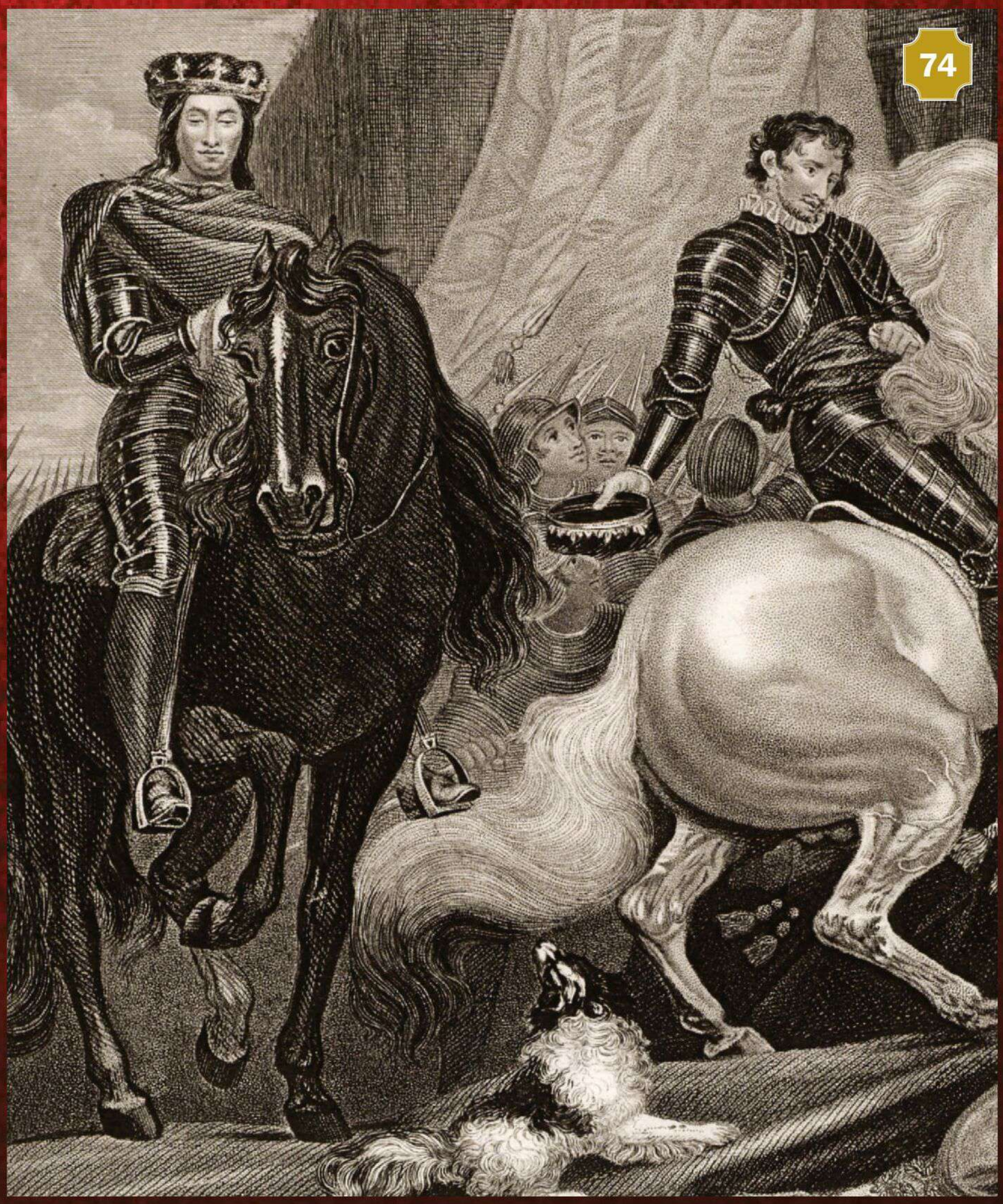





58


68


78


74


76
DVQ

CAROLINE WAR



Charles created a vast library housed in the Louvre, comprising over 1,200 volumes

Charles surrounded himself with talented advisors known as the Marmousets

KEY PLAYER

CHARLES V

How a mild and unassuming man led France from devastation to miraculous recovery

Charles V was an unlikely saviour of France: he wasn't bold or brash or particularly striking; he looked nothing like his father – the tall, strong, sandy-haired John II. Charles was physically weak, pale, thin and ill-proportioned. However, he boasted a high intellect, and his years of experience and careful consideration would give his countrymen hope after the devastation of the first phase of the Hundred Years' War.

It was not an easy beginning for Charles V. Born in January 1338 to John II and Bonne of Luxembourg, the Hundred Years' War had just broken out, and the country was still ravaged by the Black Death. It was a time of fighting, demise and desperation, and Charles, even as the heir to the throne, could not avoid it for long. After becoming the first heir styled as the Dauphin, his mother and grandmother both died of the plague, and Charles himself became seriously ill in 1349. When he had recovered, he married his cousin, Joanna of Bourbon, at the age of 12.

Charles did not have to wait long before he was thrust into military and political life. At 17, he became involved in a rebellion against his father, led by a man who would become his arch nemesis: the King of Navarre, known as Charles the Bad. He was successful in his role, managing to temporarily reconcile Navarre with the King and avoid an alliance between England and the rebels. Charles had managed to stop war between the two families, for which his subjects respected him.

Charles truly was tested, however, when his father and younger brother were taken prisoner at the Battle of Poitiers. Charles had been sent away just in time to avoid capture, and was swiftly sworn in as regent while his father was taken to England.

Charles could not have been thrust into leadership of a more fractured land. Because of King John's capture, it was believed that France's nobles had abandoned the royal family, and popular opinion turned against them. The English demanded a huge ransom for the King of three million crowns and the cessation of most of western France. Charles attempted to raise the



Charles was known not for his strength, but his intellect and quick mind

sum by devaluing the currency and raising taxes, but it would prove impossible.

The defence of France plummeted against an impending English threat, and in order to try and bolster it, he summoned the Estates-General. Furious at what they saw as poor management, many of the men formed a body led by the provost, Étienne Marcel. They demanded political concessions, and the release of the King of Navarre, who had since been imprisoned. Charles promptly refused these terms, but when Marcel responded by ordering strikes, he had no choice but to accept. When this news reached his father, still prisoner in England, he too refused to agree.

Charles decided to do things the old fashioned way, slowly working his way through France's provinces to win support, and finally set his sights on the capital. Marcel attempted to scare Charles by having two of the King's councillors assassinated in front of him. However, this served as the nail in Marcel's coffin, turning support against him and leading to his murder at the hands of a mob in 1358. Without Marcel in his way, Charles regained control of Paris.

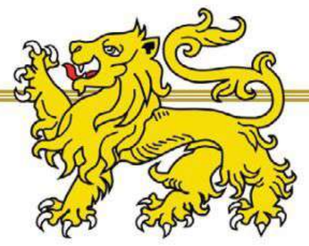
The regent had enough on his plate containing threats from within, but the English were also hot on his trail. His father had signed the Treaty of London, ceding most of western France to the nation, but this was rejected by Charles, leading King Edward III of England to invade the nation. Edward reached Reims in December and Paris in March. However, Charles managed to successfully defend his lands by avoiding direct confrontation with the enemy, and relying on municipal fortifications. This strategy of non-confrontation was extremely successful, and even as Edward ravaged the French countryside, he was not awarded a decisive battle. This allowed for new negotiations, which ceded just a third of western France to England and lowered the ransom for the King. John was finally set free.

For Charles, this was a difficult period. Two of his young daughters died within months of each other, and he was struck with great sorrow for the losses. He also became very ill himself with suspected arsenic poisoning, and his hair and nails began falling out. His father was an ineffective ruler, and was forced to return to captivity, dying soon after.

Charles was finally, officially, declared king in 1364. He was not a figure to strike inspiration into his subjects; quiet with a grave manner and suffering from gout, and with an abscess in his left arm that could kill him if left untreated. However, personally he was regarded as rather emotional. His marriage with Joan of Bourbon was a happy one and his connection with his children, including the five who died in his lifetime, was well documented.

Charles was primarily concerned with regaining the territory he had ceded. For this aim, he had the allegiance of Bertrand of Guesclin, a very skilled nobleman who was an expert in guerilla warfare. Bit by bit, Charles' armies were successful in regaining the former French territory from the English, following the example of avoiding direct pitched battles and instead using sieges and negotiations. Perhaps most notable was the Battle of Pontvallain, in which the English were routed and their 30-year reputation of invincibility in open battle was smashed. Multiple important English leaders were killed over the span of a few months, and the Black Prince himself was forced to flee France.

Charles was regarded as a builder king, and he created or rebuilt many prominent structures such as the Bastille and the Château de Vincennes



By 1375, Charles had managed to reclaim almost all the territories he had ceded in the previous treaty, leaving the English with little more than a strip of coastline in western France. Charles also disposed the King of Navarre of nearly all his French lands, eliminating his threat to Paris.

The abscess that the King knew would eventually claim his life dried up in 1380 and he prepared to leave this world. He died on 16 September, aged 42, leaving his 11-year-old son, Charles VI, to succeed him. Over his reign, Charles had managed to replenish the royal treasury which had run bone dry, establish the first permanent army with paid wages, and reclaimed the territories ceded to the English. He is remembered today as Charles 'the Wise' for his actions, and the France he left behind was far more stable and hopeful than the one he had been born into.

France's first royal Dauphin

How Charles became the first French prince to hold the title

The title of Dauphin of Viennois had been passed down through the family of Guigues IV, count of Albon, until 1349. Humbert II, current Dauphin of Viennois, found himself ruined by a crusade in Palestine, and was also childless after the death of his only son. In order to make funds, he decided to sell the Dauphiné, then a fief of the Holy Roman Empire. However, he struggled for buyers, as neither the Pope nor the Emperor were interested in purchasing it. Eventually, Philip VI, father of John II, bought it and it was agreed in the Treaty of Romans that the Dauphiné would be held by a son of the future king, John. Charles, as the eldest, became the first Dauphin at the age of 12. The Dauphiné was a very valuable possession to France, as it laid in a major trade route. The title itself was traditionally handed down to the heir of the throne, similar to the title of Prince of Wales in Britain. It survived, passed down through the generations, until the constitution of 1791, which saw it abolished (apart from a brief period of 1824-1830 during the Bourbon Restoration).



The title 'Dauphin' came from the dolphin portrayed on their coat of arms

KEY PLAYER

BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN

The rise and rise of a French commander born in obscurity

Born in Motte-Broons, a small town in Brittany, France, in 1320, Bertrand du Guesclin wasn't necessarily destined for greatness. The first-born son of Robert du Guesclin and Jeanne du Malmaines of Sens was known to be unattractive to the point where he was unloved by his mother. He was short and ugly, but he always knew how to fight. Aged nine, du Guesclin gathered other children in the town to create pretend battles and contests, always taking a leading part. But it was at the age of 17 that events that would transform his life began to unfold.

A tournament came to nearby Rennes, and while he wasn't a member of the nobility, he found a horse and helmet to cover his face before enrolling in the competition. He supposedly bested every competitor he faced that day. Not only was this a sign of things to come, but it also coincided with the start of the Hundred Years' War, and du Guesclin was ready to fight.

In 1341, his first post was serving under Charles de Blois in the War of the Breton Succession as the Bretons took sides depending on their geographical locations. Du Guesclin led a band of adventurers with an iron fist and managed to garner some attention at the Siege of Vannes in 1342. For the next decade or so he roamed across the north of France, taking part in sieges and raids against the English forces trying to make their way south.

Making a name for himself in Brittany, he caught the eye of French marshal Arnoul d'Audrehem, who knighted him for capturing the English knight Sir Hugh Calveley in 1354. It was soon after this triumph that du Guesclin came to the attention of the dauphin, Charles. As the English laid siege to the city of Rennes in 1356, it was du Guesclin's leadership at the head of a small band of men that had saved the day, and as a reward, Charles, acting as regent for his father, gave him an annual pension of 200 livres.

The royal patronage didn't stop there. Du Guesclin was made a royal captain of the Franco-Breton troops based at Pontorson and tasked with countering English offensives. In this he excelled, for he was equally as skilled as his English counterparts. However, he was stretched thin and the likelihood of him being captured was high. As a matter of fact, he was captured by the English twice in two years, but his freedom was negotiated both times.

In 1364, du Guesclin spent most of his time in Normandy and Brittany winning victory after victory while the dauphin ascended to the French throne as Charles V. Now king, Charles placed his loyal commander at the head of the free companies and sent him to Spain to help Henry of Trastámara in his fight against Peter the Cruel as he sought the Castilian throne. It was after the Battle of Montiel in 1369 that du Guesclin helped trick Peter into meeting with Henry, ending the contest once and for all as Henry stabbed Peter in the face upon recognising his adversary.

Later that decade, conflict resumed in the Hundred Years' War and du Guesclin set out on a mission to reconquer what the English had taken. Poitou and Saintonge both fell back under French rule, and in 1370–74 he chased the English back to the northernmost reaches of France. On 2

Ready, set, duel

Du Guesclin would do anything to defend his home

When Henry of Lancaster attacked Dinan in 1357, du Guesclin wasn't happy. His home was being threatened. But he snapped when Thomas of Canterbury took his brother Olivier captive.

Filled with rage, du Guesclin challenged Thomas to a duel. The two of them mounted their horses and charged at each other with lances. When this failed to establish a clear winner, it was time for a horseback sword fight. After fighting for a long time with no sign of one besting the other, Thomas lost his sword. Worried about someone picking it up and handing it back to the Englishman, du Guesclin dismounted to try to kick it away, at which Thomas went in for the kill, trying to crush the Frenchman with his horse.

In an act of self-defence, du Guesclin instinctively ran his sword through his enemy's horse, killing it and causing Thomas to fall to the ground. With a single punch from a gaunlet-covered hand, du Guesclin finished his enemy. A top fighter and a passionate Frenchman, nothing would get between him and the land he loved.



The town of Dinan today

Du Guesclin was so prolific that epic poems were written about him, such as 'Chanson de Bertrand du Guesclin' and 'La vie du vaillant Bertrand du Guesclin'



The keys of Châteauneuf-de-Randon at Languedoc being laid on du Guesclin's coffin in 1380



Bertrand du Guesclin, the man who rose from almost nothing to lead France's military in the Hundred Years' War

October 1370, du Guesclin was given perhaps the greatest honour of all – he was made a constable of France by Charles V. This position was highly coveted as it was one of the five great offices of the French crown, and it was one that du Guesclin didn't take lightly. In fact, he actually refused the post when it was first offered as he was of low birth, but Charles insisted.

As constable he led most of France's military operations, and in 1372 he reconquered several towns in the Guyenne region, part of the contentious duchy of Aquitaine, and in 1373 he shadowed the duke of Lancaster's English army on their route from Calais. His main tactic here was to let Lancaster know that he was there but refuse to fight. This method proved extremely successful. They followed the English soldiers until all 6,000 of them were starving and disease-ridden – they'd been unable to take or pillage any towns en route lest du Guesclin's men decide to fight. The English returned home in April 1374.

When du Guesclin was captured by the English, he set his own ransom as 100,000 livres. The English thought no one would pay the price – but the French did

Du Guesclin went from success to success in the 1370s. By late 1372, the English-held towns in Poitou were faltering and the last fortress fell to the French in February 1375. However, 1379 witnessed some trouble. When du Guesclin learned that Charles was questioning his loyalty, he offered to give up the role of constable and retire to Spain. Charles quickly came around and ordered him to Languedoc to fight.

Languedoc was to be du Guesclin's final outing. The soldier undoubtedly wanted to die in battle, but alas that wasn't to be. As his men laid siege to a strongly garrisoned fortress held by the English, the constable fell ill and died on 13 July 1380. The commander who took over the siege ultimately won and placed the castle's keys on du Guesclin's coffin in recognition that they wouldn't have been there had it not been for him.

Having risen from provincial obscurity to the highest military post in the land, the 'Black Dog of Brocéliande' was buried in the Tomb of the Kings of France at Saint-Denis and his heart was sent to the basilica of Saint-Sauveur in Dinan, near to where his story began. Remembered throughout history as a chivalric knight at the heart of the Hundred Years' War, du Guesclin's reputation as a fearless fighter helped France to many victories in the first half of the conflict.



THE WAR OF THE BRETON SUCCESSION

England and France vied for control of the strategically important duchy of Brittany, funding a brutal proxy war that ravaged the territory for years

In the early years of the Hundred Years' War, England and France became embroiled in a secondary conflict that would shape the outcome of the hostilities for years to come. The battlefield was the duchy of Brittany, a coastal region in an excellent position to command shipping between England and Aquitaine.

The rulers of Brittany also held the English earldom of Richmond, which the English hoped would make the Bretons more amiable to their interests on the continent. This ideal tactical and mercantile position, with the title thrown in, meant that the Breton nobility courted both the English and French crowns and had to maintain a delicate balance between the two.

But this balance was upset by the death of the old Duke John III in 1341, who left two contenders for the ducal seat, John of Montfort, his half-brother, and his niece Joan of Penthièvre. John III had never seen eye to eye with Montfort, a child from their father's other marriage, and spent much of his reign making sure he would be left out of the inheritance. The late duke even tried to sell the whole duchy to Philip VI and extinguish Brittany as an independent state.

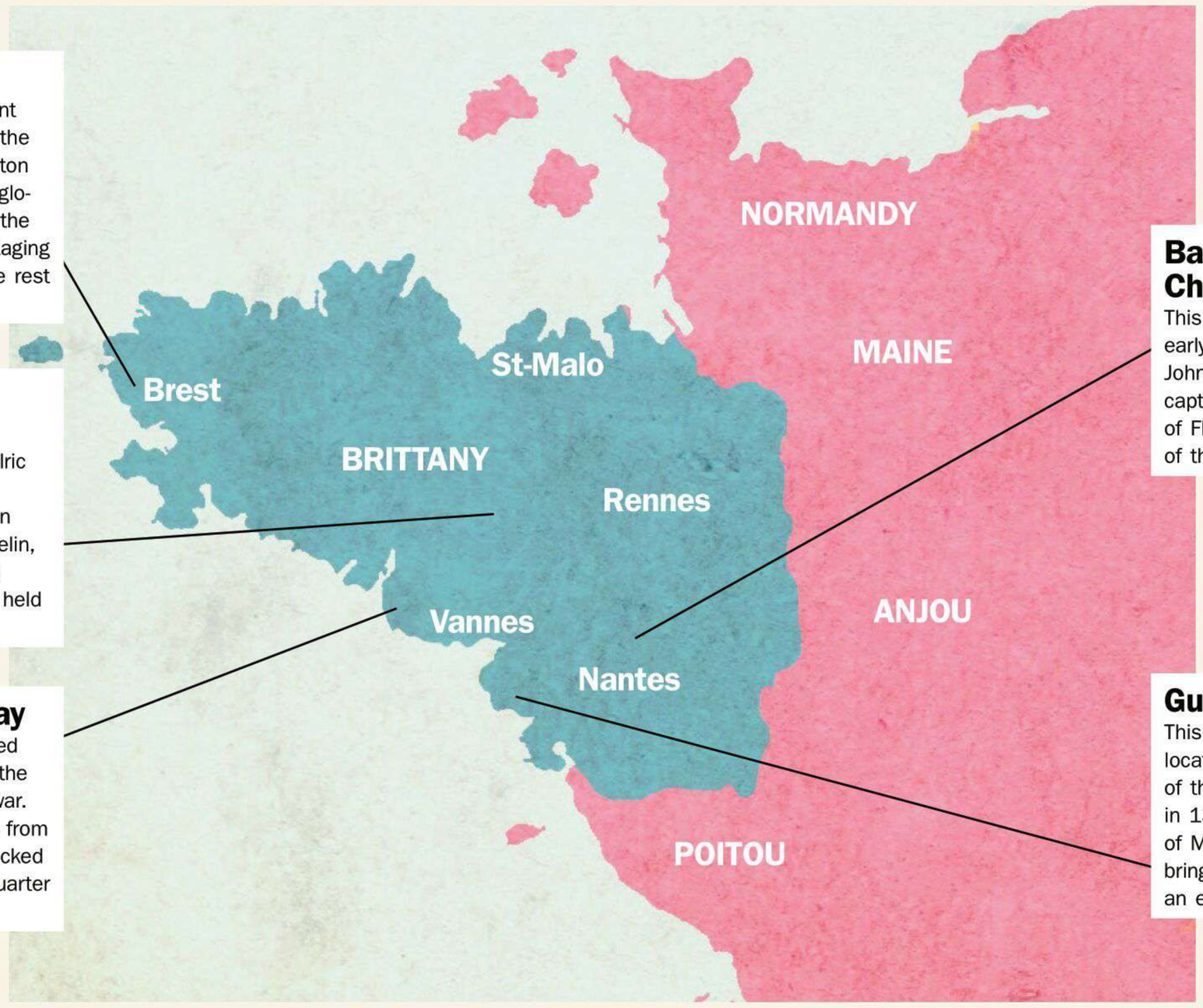
The opposition from the Breton nobility was stoked by Montfort and John III found his niece to be the only contender for the title. Fearing that an unmarried woman would be taken advantage of, he betrothed her to Charles of Blois, a powerful French noble and nephew of the king of France. John III then threw the succession into disarray by naming Montfort as his heir in his final will and when asked about the decision on his deathbed, he replied, "For God's sake leave me alone and do not trouble my spirit with such things."

The inheritance was far from certain, however, as although Montfort had been named heir, the nobles threw most of their support behind Joan and her husband. Both parties immediately sent out messengers to the English and French camps asking for aid to claim what they both saw as their rightful seat of power.

Charles of Blois, taking command of his wife's claim, was an interesting character, being extremely pious and austere while still being able to command the loyalty of his followers through his exemplary military skills. This, coupled with his lineage, made him the obvious contender to receive the king of France's support and blessing. Montfort, using the duchy's close ties to England,

Battle for Brittany

The struggle for Brittany raged the length and breadth of the duchy, leaving nowhere untouched by the violence



Brest
A strategically important town, Brest protected the sea route into the Breton peninsula. It fell to Anglo-Breton forces early in the war and acted as a staging area for sorties for the rest of the conflict.

Combat of the Thirty
The sight of this chivalric display was held on neutral ground between the fortresses of Josselin, controlled by the Blois faction, and Ploërmel, held by the Montforts.

Battle of Auray
The battle that decided the final outcome of the long and protracted war. The two sides, weary from years of fighting, attacked each other with no quarter asked or given.

Battle of Champtoceaux
This pivotal battle in the early years of the war saw John of Montfort being captured. His wife, Joanna of Flanders, took command of the faction's forces.

Guérande
This town served as the location for the signing of the final peace treaty in 1365, solidifying John of Montfort as duke and bringing the struggle to an end.

petitioned Edward III for support and was obliged as the monarch did not want the French gaining an ally that controlled such an important link between England and the continent.

Much of the Breton nobility sided with Blois as he shared a common ancestry and culture with them. While Brittany prided itself on its independence, it was aware that it fit into the larger framework of French territories and the nobles were loath to side with an outsider like Montfort. Being disinherited for much of his life had left Montfort without many allies or connections at court. Being an amiable man, many noted that it was his wife, Joanna of Flanders, who held the real power in his camp, being described as having "the spirit of a man and the heart of a lion".

Knowing his lack of support would hinder him in the long term, Montfort struck quickly and took hold of many possessions including the capital at Nantes and the ducal treasury at Limoges. He had also captured and garrisoned many of the castles in the east of the duchy.

With his forces strung out across the land, Montfort was in no position to stand against Charles and the 7,000 men who accompanied him on his offensive. Scrounging up a small army, Montfort managed to catch Charles separated from his main force at a farm near Champtoceaux. The two rivals engaged in a bloody skirmish that lasted several days until Montfort was forced to retreat under the sheer weight of numbers the French could bring to bear. Under siege at Nantes, he was ordered to surrender by the hostile townsfolk and was captured.

Instead of spelling the end for English interests in Brittany, Montfort's cause was taken over by his wife, whose tough and ambitious nature gave her the same loyalty that had been enjoyed by her husband. Consolidating her position, Joanna was besieged at Brest by Charles and a squadron of Genoese galleys.

In the nick of time, the earl of Northampton arrived with 1,400 men and 140 ships, creating a victory that secured Brest for Montfort and the English faction that controlled the entrance to the Breton peninsula. The location was so important to the English that Montfort leased it to the king the following year until 1397.

Edward III personally led an army from Brest but the planned three-year Truce of Malestroit was signed between France and England in early 1343. The ceasing of hostilities between the two kingdoms did little to affect the battle for Brittany, though. Montfort was released from prison but died shortly after in 1345, seeing his forces again come under the command of the fiery Joanna. While travelling to England to drum up support, Joanna was kept confined to Tickhill Castle for the rest of

The war was a military victory for the Anglo-Breton forces but eventually turned into a strategic and political win for France



The Battle of Auray was the most savage conflict in the entire war but its decisiveness saw the Montforts come out on top

her life, presumably so that Edward III could exert his personal influence in Brittany.

However, these setbacks were not enough to swing the tide of war in Blois' favour as his ally, France, which had provided him with the majority of his troops and supplies, was under pressure from the English. With Edward III's victory at Crécy, where his forces had crushed a much larger French army, the English were in an excellent position on the continent. The capture of Calais the following year only led to more French woes and the withdrawal of vital support for Blois' claim. Slowly but surely, his forces began to lose ground to the English-allied Bretons.

"THE MEMORY OF THIS ATROCITY WAS STILL FRESH IN PEOPLE'S MINDS"

With Brittany being a fair distance away from the French crown's heartlands, Edward III was content to leave the running of the Breton campaign to his lieutenants rather than intervene himself. His captains established personal control and acted as autonomous rulers, staunchly pushing Blois' supporters back.

Blois had done himself no favours ingratiating himself with the Breton population and had ordered the massacre of citizens when he had captured the town of Quimper a few years earlier. As French support withdrew, the memory of this atrocity was still fresh in people's minds and Blois found it increasingly difficult to find backing.

His capture at the Battle of La Roche-Derrien was a terrible blow to his cause. Laying siege to the town, Blois ordered his men to erect barricades to protect them from the dreaded longbowmen manning the walls. However, after defeating a relief force, he became overconfident and let his army become disorganised.

The citizens, no doubt remembering the massacre at Quimper, organised a sortie and crushed the would-be duke's forces. His incarceration in the Tower of London prompted Pope Innocent VI to demand a truce – Christians killing Christians had never sat well with the Church and this conflict was no exception.

In an effort to end the fighting, a battle was planned that has become known as one of the best examples of Medieval chivalry in Western Europe – the Combat of the Thirty. The two sides each selected 30 knights to fight, with the winner ideally deciding the outcome of the entire war. The brutal and desperate fight that ensued left six

Joan the Flame

Meet the real warrior woman of the Medieval period

When talking about female leadership in the Hundred Years' War, you would be hard-pressed to find a narrative that doesn't focus on Joan of Arc – but she wasn't the only one. Joanna of Flanders, also known as Joan the Flame, was widely seen as the mastermind behind the early Anglo-Breton military campaign.

When her husband, John of Montfort, was captured in 1341, Joanna took over direct control of his forces and became the leader of the Montfort cause, even going so far as to fight on the front line with her loyal troops. This earned her praise from a fair few of her contemporaries and prompted her to be labelled the "most extraordinary woman of her age".

Her defence of the town of Hennebont became legendary when she exhorted the local women to join and "cut their skirts and take their safety into their own hands". She also participated in a fierce naval engagement where her fleet fought off a larger force led by Franco-Breton allies.



Joanna of Flanders is suggested to have been one of the influences on the famous Joan of Arc



The Combat of the Thirty has since been recognised as the epitome of Medival chivalry

Franco-Breton and nine Anglo-Breton men dead. Although the French alliance was technically victorious, the combat had no impact on the eventual outcome of the conflict.

For a little over two years, the war ground on at a stalemate with neither side making any meaningful gains. Seeing an opportunity to profit from the secondary conflict, Edward III agreed to recognise Blois as the duke of Brittany for the princely sum of £300,000 and the marriage of his claimant, John of Montfort, to his daughter Mary. This truce would have brought the hostilities to an end had it not been for the involvement of the troublesome Charles II of Navarre.

Known as Charles the Bad, the king was famous among his contemporaries for his duplicitousness and was constantly switching sides. By having the officiator of the treaty killed and then allying himself with the Franco-Bretons in exchange for land, he sank the treaty before it had even begun. A further upset to the English faction was that Blois had already been released and had made his way back to the French camp to renew his offensive.

Even the return of their leader could not break the stalemate, though, as the French had suffered yet more devastating defeats to the English – namely at Poitiers, where the French king was captured and ransomed back at an exorbitant rate. This crippled the French economy and led to a longer ceasefire than any amount of diplomacy had managed up until that point.

When John of Montfort, now of age, returned to Brittany in 1362, intent on claiming what he saw as his rightful duchy, hostilities resumed and the war came to a close at the brutal Battle of Auray. With both sides weary of the extended conflict and sensing the end was near, no quarter or mercy was shown. The Franco-Bretons threw themselves head-on into the enemy until Blois was slain in a charge.



The death of Duke John III of Brittany was the cause of the succession crisis and the years of bloodshed that followed

Victory saw John of Montfort take his place as Duke John IV but what seemed like an overall victory for the English was short-lived. The Montfort family still held very little in the way of support from the Breton nobles and the long occupation of the territory by English mercenaries had done nothing for good will between the kingdoms. Seeing a chance to consolidate power and escape from the influence of Edward III, and no doubt remembering his mother's treatment at the king's hands, John swore fealty to France instead.

CAROLINE WAR

SAVIOUR OF CASTILE

How events in the Castilian civil war determined the fate of the Hundred Years' War

King Peter I of Castile lost no time in settling scores against members of his extended family when he took the throne in 1350. As his first order of business, he imprisoned Leonor de Guzmán, the mistress of his father, Alfonso XI, who had given him ten children. He also executed many of his illegitimate half-brothers on suspicion of treason in the years that followed.

Another act of nastiness concerned his teenage bride. In a half-hearted attempt to ally his kingdom with France, Peter had agreed to marry Blanche de Bourbon, the sister-in-law of Dauphin Charles. Two days after the wedding in 1353, he suddenly cast her aside in favour of his mistress. The monarch ordered Blanche confined indefinitely, and in all likelihood was responsible for her death. Charles – the future Charles V of France – never forgot the heartless act. For these misdeeds and many others, Peter more than earned himself the sobriquet 'the Cruel'. Peter also reversed many of the key alliances built by his father, including the diplomatic relations with France in favour of an alliance with England.

Count Henry of Trastámara, the eldest of Alfonso's surviving illegitimate children, initially paid homage to Peter, but only out of expediency. Alfonso thought very highly of Henry, and he had bestowed upon him the fief of Trastámara. In 1356, Henry had tried to seize the Castilian throne by force. Unsuccessful, he fled to the safety of Aragon to recoup. The deciding factor in Henry's attempt to usurp the Castilian crown was the availability of mercenaries in France as a result of a timely lull in the Hundred Years' War. French regent Charles Valois, who would ascend to the French throne in 1364 as Charles V, desperately wanted to be rid of the thousands of uncontrollable mercenaries, known as routiers, who plagued France following the Treaty of Brétigny.



Without the English to even the odds, Peter was defeated by Henry and du Guesclin on 14 March 1369. Nine days later, they conspired to execute him

Charles and his advisers, one of whom was his brother Louis, Duke of Anjou, devised a scheme by which many of the so-called Free Companies of routiers would be funneled into the Iberian Peninsula where they might continue their freebooting ways. The French crown broached the idea to Henry when he visited Paris seeking military aid in 1362. An initial attempt that year failed when a local conflict between warring lords in the Languedoc region drew off the majority of routiers bound for Spain.

Henry remained confident that the idea had lasting appeal to the French. Working closely with Charles of Anjou, who represented the French crown, he successfully revived the previous invasion plan to regain the throne of Castile in 1366. In order to get the papacy to help finance the expedition, they duped Pope Urban V, who resided in Avignon, into believing that they were enlisting the routiers in southeast France to participate in a crusade against the Moors in Granada, Spain. The ploy worked beautifully and the pontiff immediately bought into the idea. Charles V ordered Bertrand du Guesclin, a routier captain from Brittany, to assemble a large number of small free companies into a single Great Company and lead under Henry's banner.

Peter the Cruel, aware of the major threat that his illegitimate half-brother posed to his crown, negotiated a detailed agreement in June 1362 with Edward, the formidable Black Prince, heir to England's King Edward III. Peter could call on the Edward for military support so long as he could provide money. What won Edward over, though, was the assistance that the powerful Castilian Navy could provide for English operations in France. It was the same thing that enticed the French, who planned to use it against the English.

Henry's powerful supporters put the invasion on the fast track in autumn 1365. The French soldiers, eager for plunder abroad, assembled in Roussillon in December and du Guesclin led them to Barcelona.

The invading army crossed the frontier in early March 1366 and marched rapidly towards the

Castilian capital of Burgos. Peter took one look and was terrified. He fled to Prince Edward in Aquitaine, abandoning the city to the pretender. Although Henry had been crowned soon after crossing the Castilian border, this was the perfect time for his formal coronation and he officially became king on 29 March. Meanwhile, Peter was plotting with Edward to take the throne back.

The Black Prince was driven not only by the long-term goal of having access to the Castilian Navy to support future military operations, but also the need to compile as much wealth as possible to govern Aquitaine and fund future military offensives. Seeing as his army would need to march through Navarre, he also brought the territory's ruler King Charles II into the discussions. An agreement was soon reached. The total cost

"HENRY REMAINED CONFIDENT THAT THE IDEA HAD LASTING APPEAL TO THE FRENCH"

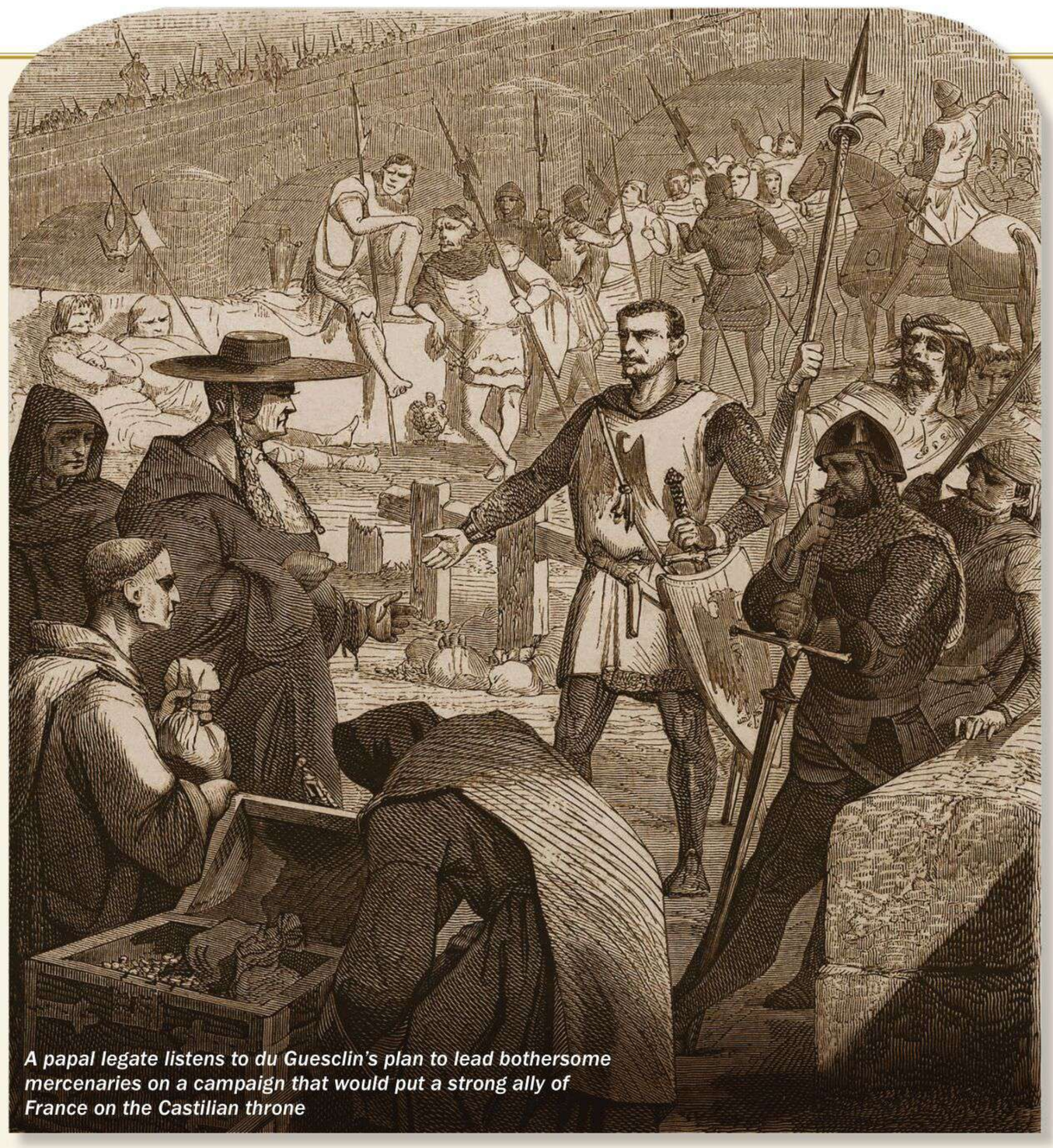
of Peter's restoration was to be a staggering 1.6 million florins, an amount that he swore he would pay. What Peter kept quiet, though, was that there was no way he could raise the funds.

Back in Burgos, the vast majority of the routiers had returned to France and so Henry assembled approximately 10,000 troops to defend the city against his half-brother. His royal army, which was predominately made up of Aragonese and Castilian units, comprised 5,500 men-at-arms, 1,000 of them French, and 4,500 feudal levies.

Du Guesclin strongly advised Henry not to face the Black Prince's army in a pitched battle. "They are the best fighting men on earth," he warned. Instead, he recommended that Henry wage a defensive war and wear down Edward's forces through attrition. If such a strategy was adopted, he counseled, the Anglo-Gascon army might soon become tired and hungry and withdraw to Aquitaine. Alas, the advice would go unheeded – Henry believed he needed a decisive victory to add an air of legitimacy to his claim to the throne.

The Black Prince's 7,000-strong army departed for Castile on 14 February 1367, but there was a problem when they reached Vitoria – Henry's forces blocked their route to Burgos. A stalemate ensued for about a month until late March when the invaders finally broke camp and marched south.

Edward's men crossed the Ebro River and occupied the village of Navarette. Henry shadowed



A papal legate listens to du Guesclin's plan to lead bothersome mercenaries on a campaign that would put a strong ally of France on the Castilian throne

Killers for hire

During a lull in the Hundred Years' War, an army of French mercenaries helped Henry of Trastámara depose Peter the Cruel

The Treaty of Brétigny, signed four years after the Black Prince's crushing victory over the French at Poitiers in 1356, left thousands of unemployed mercenaries on both sides in the Hundred Years' War to subsist either by signing on to fight in regional conflicts or through plunder and extortion. Crippled by two decades of war on its soil and brought to its knees by devastating defeats at the hands of the English, the French crown was unable to maintain the order that it had done under a strong monarchy.

The mercenaries, known as routiers, were professional men-at-arms and archers who were banded together in free companies under a tenacious captain. A company operated from a temporary stronghold and moved about in search of fresh opportunities. When a large-scale one arose, they would join forces to form a Great Company with thousands of men.

The Castilian Civil War was one of several small conflicts that employed both English and French companies in the 1360s. French king Charles V tapped Breton captain Bertrand du Guesclin to assemble a Great Company from those operating in the Rhône Valley and lead it across the Pyrenees to assist his ally Henry of Trastámara, a pretender to the Castilian throne, to gain the crown he so earnestly desired. The campaign was funded by the kings of Aragon and France as well as by the papacy.

Du Guesclin and Henry invaded Castile in March 1366. The Great Company numbered 10,000 men and was led by 25 captains – large enough to compel Peter to flee Castile without a fight. The Castilian nobles breathed a collective sigh of relief for Peter had ruled over the realm for 16 years with great cruelty.

Henry rewarded the highest-ranking captains with fiefs. Although he was driven from the throne the following year by an Anglo-Castilian army led by Edward, the Black Prince, the French crown never wavered from its support for him. When a bankrupt Peter could no longer pay the English to support him, Henry dethroned him for the second and last time in 1369.

them and took up a strong position behind a stream known as the Najerilla, just east of the town of Nájera, and the Black Prince's herald chided him with taunts about his illegitimacy meant to goad the usurper into starting the fight. The tactic worked. On 2 April, Henry ordered his troops to cross the Najerilla and form up for battle on the wide plain. It was an invitation for battle.

The Anglo-Gascon army's superior experience, heavier armour and better tactics led to a crushing victory in the Battle of Nájera fought the following day. Even better, they managed to capture du Guesclin, but Henry evaded them by fleeing to Aragon on a fresh horse.

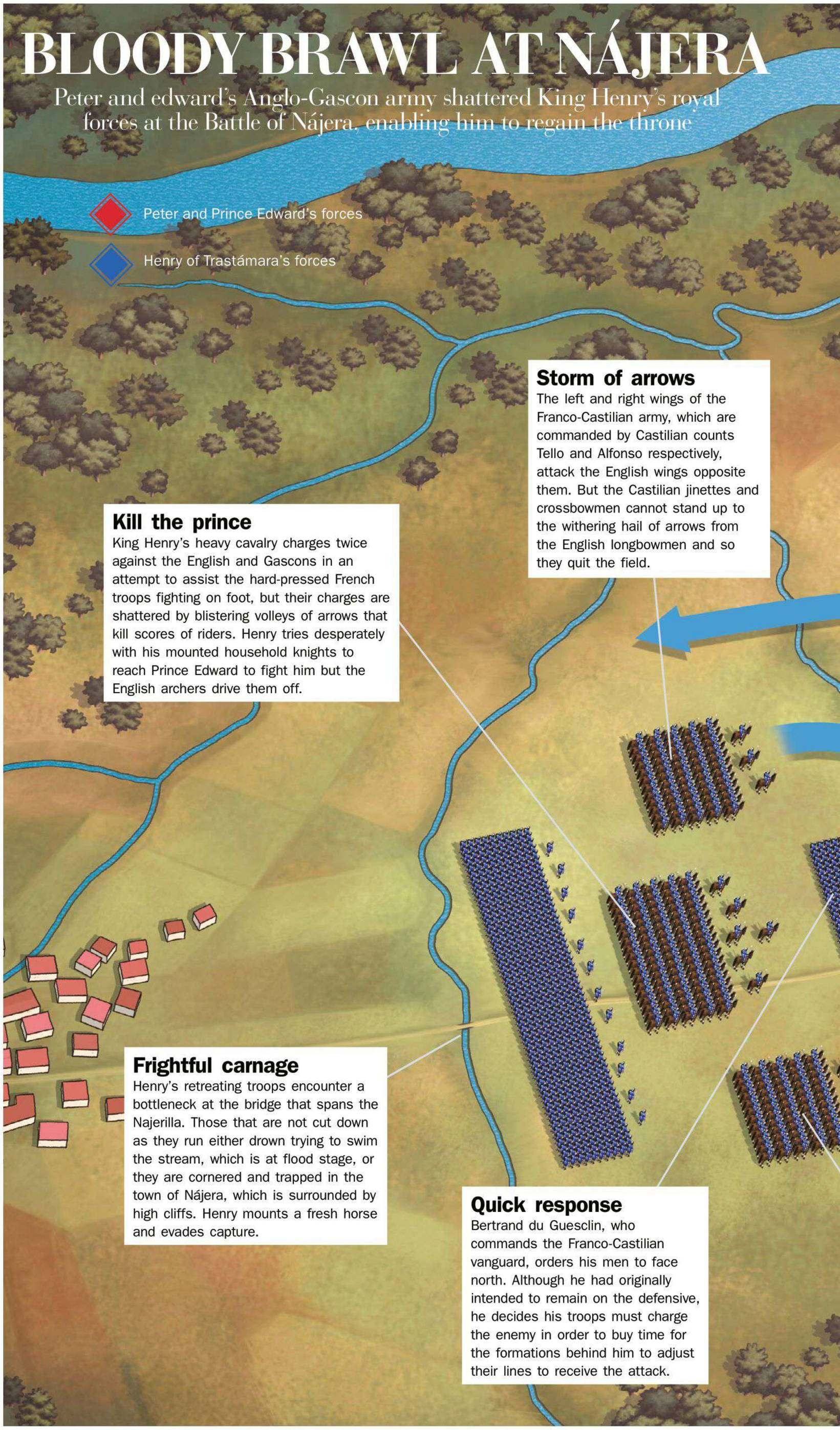
Peter had regained his throne thanks to Prince Edward and the battle had affirmed both the superb tactics of the English and the Black Prince's sterling reputation as a commander. All that was left was Peter's payment. After four long months of waiting, he finally plucked up the courage to inform Edward that he couldn't make good on even the first installment of the debt. The Black Prince returned to Aquitaine in late August with his body weakened by a mysterious illness contracted during the campaign. Despite his poor health, he began plotting to conquer Castile for himself to get back at Peter, but his father overruled the idea.

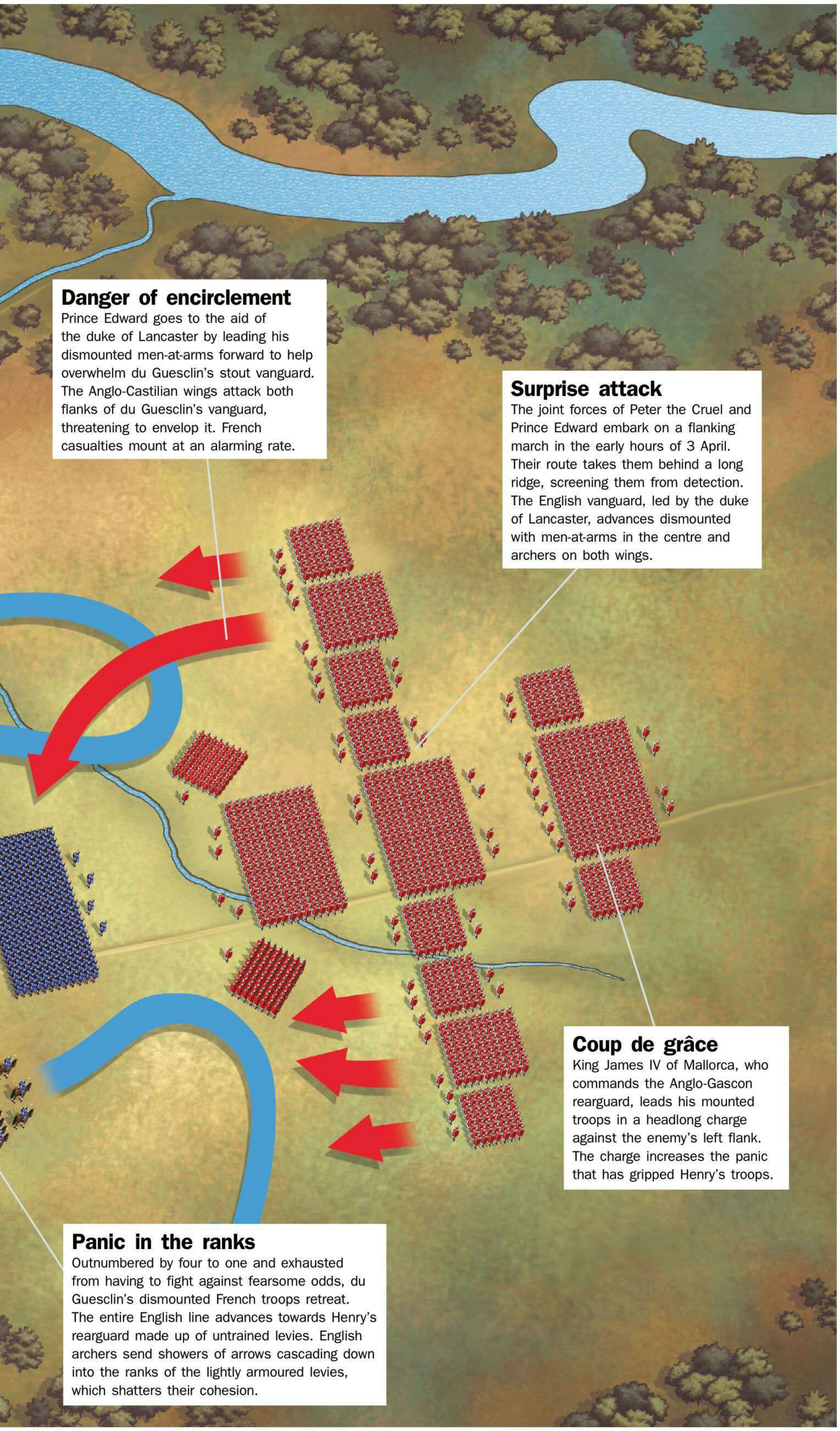
In stark contrast to the English, the French never wavered in their support for Henry. The usurped usurper met with Anjou in France just one month after the Battle of Nájera to discuss a fresh campaign to take back the Castilian throne. In return for the continued support, Henry agreed to assist France in future operations against the English, an offer that was eagerly accepted.

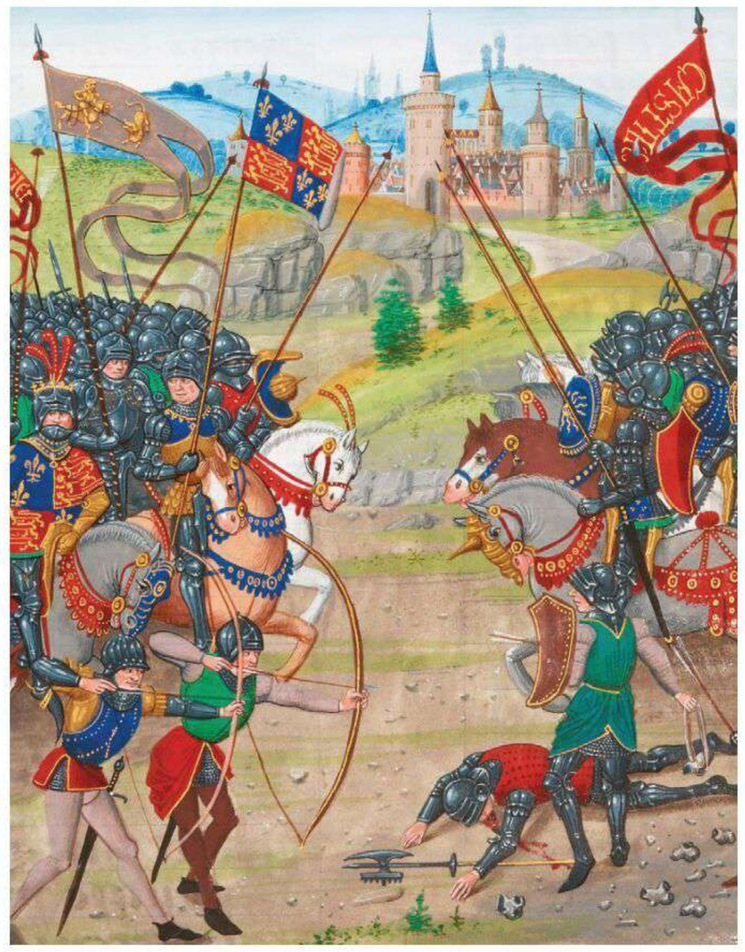
Henry reinvaded Castile in September. By this point, Peter IV of Aragon had adopted a neutral stance to avoid angering the English and so his kingdom was out of bounds. Nevertheless, Henry was determined to reach Castile – even if it meant violating Peter IV's neutrality – and he led 500 French men-at-arms from the county of Foix to Old Castile via Aragon.

Once he was back on the Castilian throne, Peter the Cruel had ordered the execution of every noble in the kingdom who had supported Henry – but this only served to alienate his subjects. Faced with another major military campaign against Henry, Peter knew that he had no one to turn to in Castile, and he could no longer call on the English for military support.

As Henry marched to Burgos, all levels of society welcomed him as a liberator. A desperate Peter fled to Andalusia and finally received some good news – Sultan Muhammed V of Granada was loaning him 7,000 light cavalry. While Burgos was empty, Henry occupied it from October and spent the rest of the year securing Old Castile and León in preparation for Peter's return. He had good news of his own,







Edward, the Black Prince, led a powerful army that defeated usurper Henry II of Castile and his French allies at Nájera and restored Peter I to the Castilian throne in April 1367

too – Prince Edward had finally decided to free du Guesclin in December after assurances that Charles V of France would pay the ransom.

As Henry besieged a royal garrison loyal to Peter in Toledo in April 1368, du Guesclin was back at his liege's side with 600 mounted men-at-arms to add to his Henry's 3,000-strong army. Envoys from the French king arrived later that year at Henry's camp outside Toledo to get his signature on a formal alliance between France and Castile directed against England. After a stalemate lasting 11 months, Peter finally advanced towards Toledo with 4,500 cavalry; however, discipline was lax among his troops. Peter's force suffered heavy casualties in the Battle of Montiel fought on 14 March 1369 in La Mancha.

When the battle was over, Peter found himself trapped in Montiel Castle. With few resources at his command, he sent a message to du Guesclin inviting him to switch sides with the tempting offer of several towns in northern Spain and 200,000 gold coins. The French captain promptly informed Henry, who assured him he would match the offer as long as he promised to betray Peter.

Nine days after the battle, du Guesclin invited Peter to his tent outside the castle. Suddenly, in walked Henry. Peter didn't stand a chance – Henry pulled out a knife and stabbed him repeatedly in the face.

In return for the consistent support of France in gaining the Castilian throne, Henry – now Henry II once more – honoured the terms of his alliance with Charles V. The French investment in him paid a most handsome dividend when the Franco-Castilian navy destroyed an English fleet off La Rochelle in the Bay of Biscay in June 1372.



The battle totally failed to lift the French siege of the town and it was captured soon after

DEFINING BATTLE

BATTLE OF LA ROCHELLE

England would see their military ambitions in France slide beneath the waves in this brutal naval clash of 1372

The Battle of La Rochelle was the first and most crushing naval defeat that England suffered during the Hundred Years' War, and possibly in the nation's history. Although a relatively small engagement in terms of numbers compared to battles like Sluys, La Rochelle saw England's fleet devastated, a loss King Edward III and the country could ill afford. Edward had once been known as the 'King of the Sea', but English naval dominance had been in decline since the 1350s and was a shadow of its former self. In addition to its struggling navy, England's grasp of its territories in France in the 1370s was teetering. Concerns about a French invasion in southern England had kept the country on the defensive, but once the rumours were found to be false, Edward III sought to bolster both his continental forces and his claim on the French crown. A young military prodigy in John Hastings, the Earl of Pembroke had recently been made Lieutenant of Aquitaine, and was tasked with raising around 3,500 troops to defend the province and aid the King's forces when they eventually landed.

A few years before the battle, England had backed Peter the Cruel's claim to the Castilian throne, whereas France had supported his brother, Henry of Trastámara. The throne went to Henry, and when he was informed that the English were preparing to sail, he dispatched a fleet of his own to intercept Pembroke. The English fleet seemed doomed from the start. It was not equipped for prolonged battle, having only three dedicated warships sent by the King himself. Considering the vast amounts of money accompanying the fleet to raise troops on the continent, the English must have been supremely confident or desperate to dispatch the lightly defended vessels. The number of ships that fought is impossible to know, but 20 English ships and 35 Castilian vessels are good estimates.

Pembroke took his fleet to first assist the town of La Rochelle, which had recently come under siege from a French army. The Spanish caught up with the English here and ships first clashed when they approached the town's harbour. Despite their numerical advantage, the Castilians struggled to make any headway against the English, who put

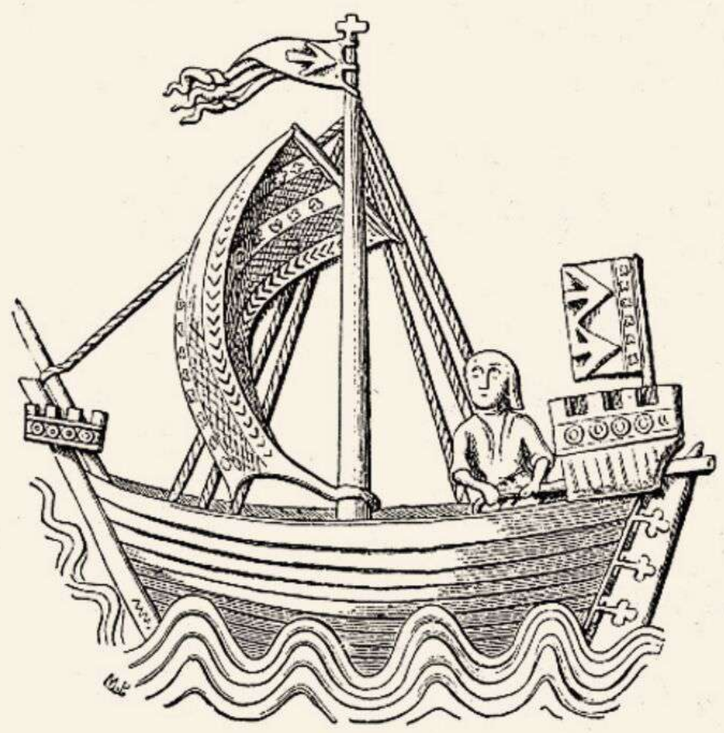
Carnage on the high seas

Medieval naval warfare was an upfront and brutal affair, with ships clashing at close quarters

Rather than long-range exchanges between ships, Medieval naval warfare was fought up-close and personal. It would be men-at-arms and archers who held the key to victory rather than gunpowder artillery, which was still in its infancy during the Hundred Years' War.

Ships could be fortified with towers filled with archers. Once the vessels had closed in, these men would use their height advantage to rain arrows down on the unfortunate enemy crew. Long-reach weapons like spears and lances were also popular, as they could be used to attack without leaving the (relative) safety of your ship.

The two main factions of the war also favoured two distinctly different types of vessel. The English went in for cogs, high-sided ships that were ideal for transporting both supplies and soldiers over water. Extremely heavy and with large storage capacity, they could become floating fortresses that could prove very hard to sink, although this meant sacrificing speed and manoeuvrability. In contrast, the French would utilise galleys – fast, flat-bottomed ships whose low draft enabled them to operate closer to land. Their nimbleness also meant that they were ideal for intercepting the slow, bulky English cogs.



An engraving of a medieval cog, the ship favoured by the English



As the ships drew alongside, the battle descended into a brutal and confusing melee

up stiff resistance. When evening fell, the turning tide forced the two fleets apart for the time being. English bow and spear work had staved off the worst of the Spanish aggression. That night, anxious discussions were held between Pembroke and his commanders as they tried to find the best course of action. Retreating was dismissed, as the faster Spanish ships would have no problem catching the fleeing English. Likewise, an attempt to relieve the town itself was abandoned, as the long draft of the English ships could leave them beached in the shallow waters surrounding the harbour.

Their final plan was to get aid from the garrison, who had watched the first day's action play out in the bay. The town's commander, Sir John Harpenden, beseeched the town's defenders to come to Pembroke's aid but was rebuffed. Many lacked sailing experience and thought it more prudent to look to the town's defences first rather than become bogged down on the water. In the end, only three knights sailed out in barges to link up with the English.

At daybreak, the Spanish renewed their attack. With their ships having a shallower draft, the Castilians were able to outmanoeuvre the sluggish English craft and with the wind in their favour, quickly surrounded Pembroke's fleet. Having the slower English ships trapped, the Spanish reportedly coated the decks and rigging of the English ships with oil. Once doused, fire arrows were used to ignite the craft. Many English sailors were burned or drowned trying to flee the infernos their ships had become. It wasn't just the men above decks who suffered. The horses kept in the holds of the ships were terrified by the flames, and in their haste to escape, kicked holes in the hulls of the English vessels. The fire and water then made short work of the ships, with many sinking and the rest falling into enemy hands.

Only the Castilians used cannons during the battle. Gunpowder weapons were still in their infancy and the English relied on bow and spear to defend their ships

With the destruction of these ships and the overwhelming numbers brought to bear against them, Pembroke and his men were either killed or captured to a man, with the Earl's ship being captured by no fewer than four Spanish vessels. The first English defeat at sea during the conflict was made all the more bitter by the capture of £12,000 meant for hiring troops in France. This financial loss was compounded by the sinking of another treasure ship holding funds to reinforce the duchy of Guyenne, which Edward III had recently gained full sovereignty over with the Treaty of Brétigny. It was quickly overrun by French forces when the money failed to arrive.



An early 20th-century re-creation of Froissart's depiction of ships at La Rochelle

The battle had far-reaching consequences in England. Edward III, upon hearing the news, immediately cancelled his invasion plans for France and looked to rebuild his naval losses. It took 14 towns working a full year to replenish the English fleet, and it enjoyed success raiding trade missions off the Spanish coast. This small gain was offset by the fact that by the time the fleet was underway, La Rochelle had been seized by the French. The English also launched devastating raids across the French countryside, with John of Gaunt leading the largest. Although they sacked and burned many towns and villages, the loss of men offset the gains made against the French.

CAROLINE WAR

THE DEATH OF THE BLACK PRINCE

The passing of Edward III's eldest son was a turning point in the history of both England and France

Words by Derek Wilson

As early as 1367, when Edward was camped with his army in hot, unsanitary conditions in Castile's Valladolid, he had succumbed to fever and dysentery. Thereafter, he suffered repeated bouts of illness that undermined his once robust constitution. In the spring of 1376, the recurrence of his sickness was so debilitating that he knew he was dying. The news caused considerable distress to those who lamented the passing of the glory days of English military success.

Few Medieval deathbed scenes were described in more graphic detail than that of the Black Prince, a military hero who was a legend in his own time. Edward lay ill for several days in his chamber at Westminster Palace, fading slowly and painfully. As well as attendants and doctors, his room was filled with family members, friends and military comrades. He ordered that the door should be left open so that no-one who wanted to bid him farewell would be denied access. Edward III, now frail of mind and body, came to say goodbye to the fifth of his adult children to predecease him. According to an eye witness, "no-one there could keep from tears in great desolation at the circumstances and the sorrow of the King".

It was the French who first gave the Black Prince his nickname, perhaps because of the black armour he wore during the Battle of Crécy

Edward's slow decline allowed him time to reflect on his past life and his soul's future destiny. This is reflected in his long and detailed will. He made several bequests to family, friends and servants. His most generous benefaction was his disafforesting of the Wirral, a large area of Cheshire, hitherto reserved for his own hunting. The charter he now issued freed the inhabitants from all restrictions, so that they were able to chase and snare to feed their own families and to pursue their own livelihoods. The events of the Prince's last days are recorded in such detail that we are able to see remarkably clearly into his state of mind. The ordering of masses for his soul was no more than conventional procedure, but his decree that he should be buried in Canterbury Cathedral, instead of the royal mausoleum at Westminster, is significant. The cathedral, containing the shrine of St Thomas Becket, was England's primary pilgrimage site. Not only that, it was connected with the humbling and penitence of Henry II and exercised considerable emotive power over several Plantagenet kings.

Humility is reflected in the epitaph Edward ordered for his tomb:

…I thought little on th'our of Death
So long as I enjoyed breath.
On earth I had great riches,
Land, houses, great treasure, horses, money and gold.
But now a wretched captive am I.
Deep in the ground, lo, here I lie.
My beauty great is all quite gone,
My flesh is wasted to the bone.

Yet this self-denigration contrasts markedly with the magnificent tomb itself. Edward specifically ordered a gilt-bronze image of himself in full armour. He also instructed that his helm, shield, surcoat and gauntlets – the accoutrements of a proud, chivalrous, warrior-knight – should be placed on display.

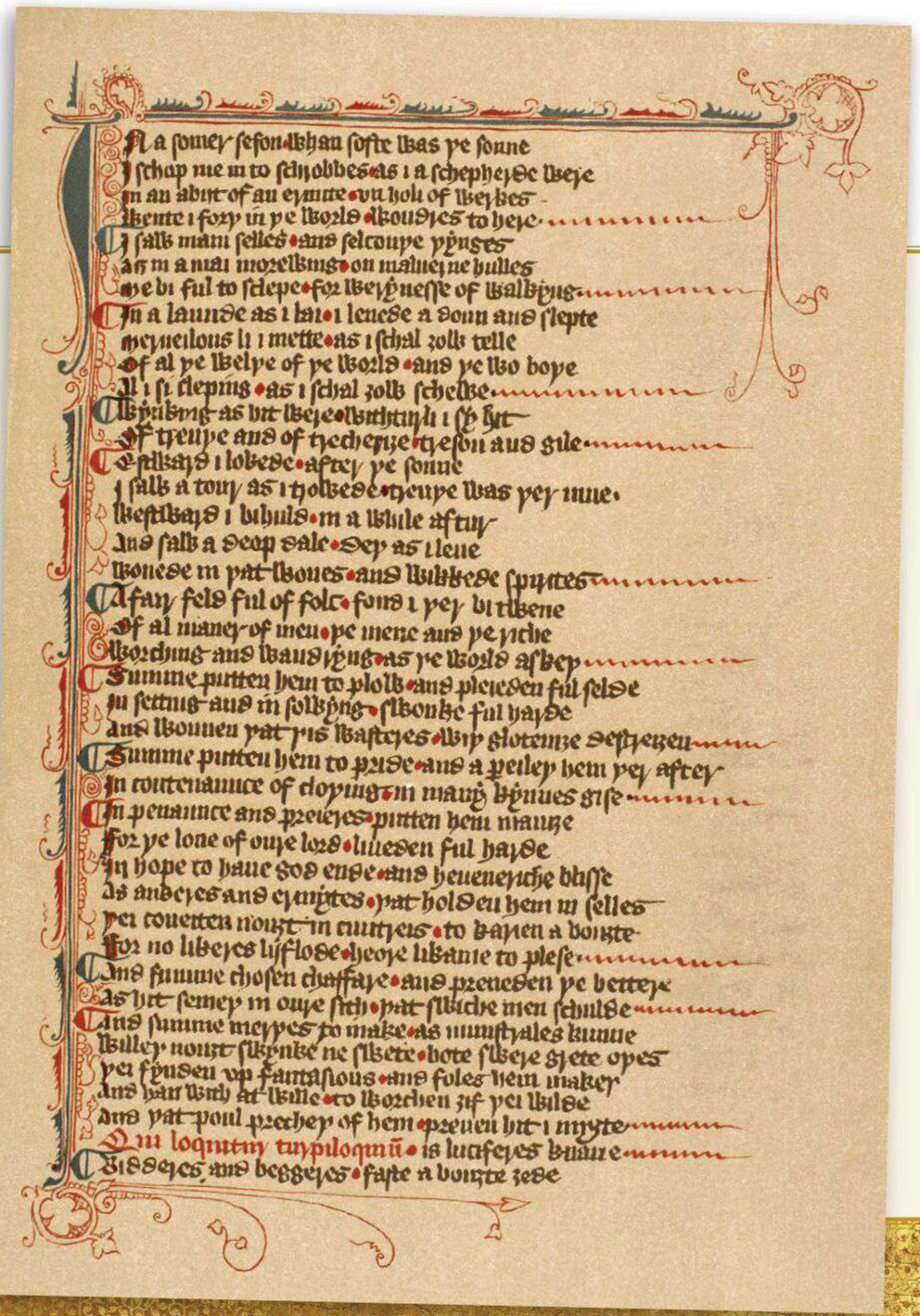
Edward made a point of making peace on his deathbed with everyone he had offended or with whom he was at odds. However, his forgiveness was not without limit. When Sir Richard Stury, a prominent warrior and royal councillor, approached the royal bed, he was met with a bitter rebuff: "Look at what you have long desired to see. May God pay you according to your desserts. Leave me and let me see your face no more." Just how Stury

THE DEATH OF THE BLACK PRINCE

Despite being heir to the throne, it was the Black Prince's son, Richard, who would wear the crown after Edward III

Belling the cat

The evils besetting England in the 14th century – plague, war, bad government – affected everyone in the kingdom and, for the first time, provoked comment from and on behalf of the common people. John Wycliffe heavily criticised the state of the Church, and his writings gave rise to the Lollard heresy, which spread widely over the years. At the end of the century, Geoffrey Chaucer poked fun at all sorts and conditions of men in his *Canterbury Tales*. Between the two stands the mysterious figure of William Langland (c.1332-1386), who wrote his poem *Piers Plowman* at about the time the Black Prince died. Under the veil of allegory, Langland made pointed reference to contemporary events. One story he told featured a parliament of rats and mice menaced by a cat. They decided to hang a bell round the cat's neck to warn them of his approach but, though they had the collar, no one was brave enough to bell the cat. Then a wise mouse urged them to abandon the plan and resign themselves to their fate, recognising that "when the cat is a kitten, the court is wretched". The 'kitten' would be recognised by hearers of the poem as young Richard II; the cat who could not be belled was John of Gaunt; and the assembly of mice and rats was the Good Parliament, now dissolved and unable to mount any opposition to the oppressor.



had caused offence we do not know. He certainly went on to serve prominently in the next reign. It may be that Stury was too close to Edward's brother, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, whose policies and influence over the King he resented. Or it may have been the fact that Stury was a Lollard, a follower of the heresy promoted by the Oxford scholar, John Wycliffe. For whatever reason, the Prince found it difficult to be reconciled to him and, only a short while before his death, uttered a grudging forgiveness.

Most of those present at the deathbed and waiting for news in the streets outside mourned the passing of a great military champion whom the chronicler Jean Froissart called "the flower of

"IT WAS NOT ONLY IN ENGLAND THAT THE PRINCE'S PASSING WAS MOURNED"

chivalry of all this world", and the man who had raised to the height England's military and political prestige. But everyone was looking anxiously towards the future. The old King was doting and lavishing lands and wealth on his 28-year-old mistress, Alice Perrers, and the royal council was dominated by John of Gaunt. There was widespread discontent at the corruption of the court and the deteriorating military situation in France. In April, King Edward III, sorely in need of funds, summoned a parliament. The assembly, which came to be known as the 'Good Parliament', set about reforming the government. They purged the council of its unworthy members and sent Alice Perrers packing. Parliament filled the conciliar gaps with

Richard II kneels alongside John the Baptist and saints Edmund and Edward the Confessor



Richard II's 22-year reign would see ongoing war with France, border conflict with Scotland and the sweeping of the Black Death through England

more reliable candidates. In all this they had the support of the Black Prince. But, as everyone well knew, Lancaster and his cronies could afford to bide their time. The King and the Black Prince were not long for this world and, after their departure, real power would be up for grabs. Some feared that Lancaster would make a bid for the crown.

Prince Edward did all he could to allay their fears. He had his father and his brothers swear to support the succession of his nine-year-old son, Richard. Then he extracted an oath from the members of parliament and all the leading men of the realm: "I commend you to my son, who is very young and little, and pray you, as you have served me, to serve him loyally." Edward died on 8 June 1376 – and the nation held its breath. It was not only in England that the Black Prince's passing was mourned. It was marked throughout Europe, and even Charles V in France had a requiem mass said for him. The influence of the Black Prince was only fully proved posthumously. Had he not been a man of such forceful personality, and had he not sworn the leading political figures to support young Richard, the kingdom might well have become a prey to warring factions. King Edward III died a year after his son and, on 16 July 1377, Richard II was duly crowned.

William Langland made the sour but prescient comment in his poem *Piers Plowman*: "Where the cat is a kitten the court is right wretched," and he applied to the English situation the biblical warning, "Woe to the land whose king is a child and whose princes feast in the morning" (Ecclesiastes 10, 16). John of Gaunt had already moved fast to consolidate his position. As soon as the Good Parliament was dissolved on 10 July, he set about undoing its work. He prevented the new councillors taking their places and re-installed his own friends. Alice Perrers was brought back to court. In December, a new parliament was summoned and met for the first time on 27 January 1377. The majority of its members aligned themselves with the royal court and, unlike its predecessor, this assembly, dubbed the 'Bad Parliament', made no bid to be independent of royal control. For example, the Good Parliament had voted no money for the continuation of the conflict in France. Its successor, under pressure from Gaunt, introduced a new levy

Edward's bronze effigy lies in Canterbury Cathedral where he is buried

The only items that the Black Prince specified in his will should be passed down to his son included a set of hangings and an unspecified amount of silver vessels





"THE DUKE WAS FORCED TO FLEE DOWN THE THAMES TO AVOID A LYNCHING"

– the poll tax. This unpopular imposition was a tax of four pence per annum on everyone over 14. The burden inevitably fell heaviest on the poorer sections of society and, in subsequent years, the tax was graded, but the attempt to make the assessment fairer never worked effectively and only served to widen social divisions. In practical terms, the Good Parliament achieved nothing. Its importance lay in the fact that it provided a forum for the airing of grievances and for criticism of the government. It fed a smouldering fire of resentment that would eventually flare up in open revolt.

Gaunt was not in a position to grasp royal power. He was unpopular with many members of the aristocracy, who were determined to hold him to his oath. He remained the most influential political figure in the country, but held no official position. There was no official regency and the young King was guided and advised by ad hoc groups of guardians chosen by parliament. Scarcely had the new reign begun before the Duke of Lancaster was once more the centre of hostility. The Bishop of London summoned John Wycliffe to be examined for his allegedly heretical opinions. Gaunt, with a posse of armed men, attended the meeting determined to support his protégé. The proposed investigation took place in St Paul's Cathedral. A crowed gathered. Jostling turned to angry words. The Duke turned on the church dignitaries: "Any more of this behaviour and I will have you dragged home by your hair! I will make you bend, you and all the rest of the bishops!" Before a full-blown riot flared up, Lancaster and his party withdrew, taking Wycliffe with them. The 'heretic' had not faced a single question. But angry reaction spread rapidly. Soon a mob was on its way to Lancaster's riverside palace, the Savoy. The Duke was forced to flee down the Thames to avoid a lynching. Meanwhile, peace negotiations with France dragged interminably on.

Before the year was out, a French raid along the south coast had looted its way from Rye to Plymouth, reduced Hastings to ashes, captured the Prior of Lewes and held him to ransom. Such events, coupled with political instability at the centre, led to frequent local disturbances. According to William Caxton's *The Chronicle of England* (1480), "In the third year of King Richard's reign the commons arisen up in divers parts of the realm… the which they called the hurling time." All this led up to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

The French might have taken the opportunity in these years to inflict a decisive victory over their enemy, but their problems were almost identical to those of the English – social unrest, political instability, resentment at taxation and hatred of the war.



KEY PLAYER

RICHARD II

The king whose thirst for revenge led to him losing his crown and his life

Born in Bordeaux in 1367, Richard inherited the throne from his grandfather Edward III – since his father, Edward, the Black Prince, had already died in 1376 – when he was just ten years old. As such, for the early parts of his reign the country was effectively run by a series of councils, but by the early 1380s the king was becoming increasingly involved. Richard would prove himself to be a capable king early on in his reign with his response to a situation that all high-born and of power feared – a peasants' revolt. Led by Wat Tyler, the 1381 revolt was triggered by the crown's demands for a poll tax to help pay for the costly Hundred Years' War with France. With many in England struggling to feed themselves, the demand for even more money was the tipping point and a large group of dissenters actually entered London where they looted, damaged buildings and killed anyone associated with the government.

Richard II, then aged 14, initially retreated for safety to the Tower of London, but with many of the royal forces in northern England or abroad he knew he needed to end the rebellion. As he didn't have the military strength to do this, diplomacy would have to suffice. The young king met with the rebels and agreed to their demands (which included abolishing serfdom) and the following day spoke with Wat Tyler just outside the city's walls. However, after an altercation broke out, Tyler was stabbed to death by the lord mayor of London, William Walworth, who feared for the safety of the king. Seeing their leader killed, the rebels seemed likely to storm the city again, but Richard rode over to them and managed to defuse the situation. This gave the city's militia time to organise themselves and 'persuade' the rebel forces to disperse. Other rebellions occurred throughout the country – notably in East Anglia – and the king mobilised around 4,000 troops to restore law and order. The revolt's aims, which Richard had only agreed to in order to buy time, were studiously ignored and by the end of the year, some 1,500 rebels had been killed. The king had passed his first test and proven himself to be a brave and intelligent ruler, but in just six years' time he would lose control of his kingdom.

"HIS ACTIONS WERE LEADING THE COUNTRY STEADILY TOWARDS CRISIS"

The crown that Richard inherited in 14th century England, and the power that came with it, was different to that of his predecessors. The Magna Carta of 1215, signed by King John, had put into law the rights of the nobles and barons and by the late 1300s it was no longer possible for a king to govern solely by himself with no consideration as to the thoughts and feelings of his leading citizens. Of course, the king was still the pre-eminent figure in the land and had the most power, but it was necessary to rule with the nobles – or at least give them the impression that the king was doing so.

Rather than rule with his nobles, though, Richard preferred to bestow patronage and power to a small group of men, many of whom were in his royal household. To these figures, mostly knights and minor nobility, he gave land, money and positions of influence in government. Michael de la Pole, the son of a merchant, rose to become chancellor of England, one of the most important and influential positions in the whole land, while the minor nobleman Robert de Vere became Duke of Ireland. These were positions that the nobility of England, the great men with their own land and armies and ancient history, believed were theirs by right. The king's military failures in France and Scotland only added to the bubbling resentment felt by the barons and earls at their marginalisation from power. The Hundred Years' War was a conflict that Richard inherited, but his policy of seeking peace not only robbed the nobles of potential glory and riches but it also failed miserably; France regained territory previously held by England and even threatened invasion of the island nation. While Richard looked – unsuccessfully – for peace in France, closer to home he was no such pacifist and military campaigns in Scotland and Ireland brought little tangible rewards for the money and effort that they cost.

Described as handsome, tall (when his grave was dug up he was discovered to be over six feet tall) and refined, Richard may have looked the part but his actions were leading the country steadily towards crisis. Money was raised through Parliament for an army to attack Scotland to break one half of the Auld Alliance between that nation and France. Richard led this force of 14,000 men himself, but the Scots refused to meet in battle and the king returned having achieved little.



The threat of a French invasion continued to loom ominously in the background and matters weren't helped for Richard when his uncle, John of Gaunt, left the country to pursue his claims to Castile in modern-day Spain. The king had an uneasy relationship with his uncle, who was one of the most powerful men in the kingdom, but John had always been loyal. In his absence Richard had lost his most influential and respected supporter and when the chancellor de la Pole demanded more money from Parliament, the fragile accord between the king and the leading men of the country shattered into tiny fragments; Parliament refused and insisted on the removal of de la Pole from his position, demanding his impeachment.

After initially dismissing Parliament's request out of hand – Richard initially said he would not dismiss so much as a scullion (a servant) from his kitchen on Parliament's command – he soon realised that he had been outmanoeuvred and he had to give into the demands of the 'Wonderful Parliament' of 1486. He grudgingly relieved de la Pole of his position and slinked, full of resentment, out of the capital to embark on a tour of the country. While he no doubt wanted to get far away from the men who had humiliated him, the tour also had a more practical purpose: to try to shore up his support throughout the nation and ensure that, if it came to it, plenty of nobles and barons would offer him their allegiance and military support.

A battle between these two opposing sides took place in 1387 but, for Richard at least, it was as an anticlimax. The king had instructed one of his favourites, Robert de Vere, to raise an army and come to his aid, but this force was met by men loyal to Parliament on one of the bridges of the river Thames in what is called the Battle of Radcot Bridge; in truth, it was barely a skirmish. The men who had been summoned to Richard's aid found they would be unable to cross the bridge and had no hope of winning against the troops commanded by Henry Bolingbroke and so their options were to surrender or flee. The 16thcCentury chronicler Raphael Holinshed wrote that only three people were killed at the battle and de Vere escaped and went into exile in France.

Richard was buried in a church in Hertfordshire, but his bones were later moved to Westminster Abbey as a sign of respect

The king now had no choice if he wanted to keep his crown but to agree to Parliament's demands. Many of the king's men were either killed or exiled as his circle of favourites was ruthlessly broken up in what was called the Merciless Parliament of 1388. Despite having his power base shattered, the authority the King of England wielded was still strong and when, in 1389, the steadying hand of John of Gaunt returned and Richard declared himself old enough to rule without advisors and secured a peace treaty with France, the signs were positive. It looked as if the conflict that had disturbed the country could just be a blip in Richard's rule, but this was a mere illusion – Richard believed that God had placed him on Earth to rule and he never forgot how Parliament had challenged his authority or executed and exiled his chosen men. He would bide his time before he reminded them of the supreme authority of the king.

This fragile peace was built on a house of cards and by the end of the 1390s came crashing down around all of the main players. The king began to rule in an increasingly tyrannical manner, abusing his power to grab land for himself and his followers and, in 1397, he had three of the leading men arrested – officially it was because of a plot, although no evidence was found, but in reality this was all about revenge; the three men – the Duke of Gloucester and the Earls of Arundel and Warwick – had been key components of the parliament that had dared to take him on. They and others who had opposed him were either executed, exiled or imprisoned as Richard II once again began to build up a power base of those whose loyalty lay exclusively with him.

The king finally went too far when on 3 February 1399 John of Gaunt, his uncle and one of his most loyal supporters, died. John's son, Henry Bolingbroke, had been banished to France, in part because Richard saw him as a threat. Henry was from the house of Lancaster and his father had controlled some of the largest landholdings in the country. However, rather than let Henry return to England and inherit what was his, Richard decided to seize the land for himself and his supporters.

Henry returned to England with a small force while Richard and most of his knights were in Ireland and, while at first Henry insisted that he was only interested in reclaiming his birthright, it soon became clear that Richard had little support and Henry's campaign was gathering momentum. When the king landed in Wales in July it was clear his kingdom had been lost; neither the nobles nor the people would fight for him. Richard met with Henry and promised to abdicate if his life was spared; he was transported to the Tower of London and Henry was crowned Henry IV on 13 October 1399. The country had a new king.

The man who had once been ruler but had thrown it all away by pursuing vengeance was transported to Pontefract Castle in Yorkshire and placed under close guard. When a plot to reinstate Richard to the throne was discovered, it was clear he was too dangerous to be left alive. Historians disagree on the exact nature of his death, but it is thought that he died in early 1400.

Richard had believed in the ultimate authority of the king, but this very belief led to him eking out his final days in a dank, dark cell far away from the throne.

KEY PLAYER

JOHN OF GAUNT

Wealthy, powerful and ostentatious, Edward III's third son could scarcely avoid being unpopular

Words by Derek Wilson



In terms of reputation John, Duke of Lancaster, was unfortunate to have grown up in the shadow of his father and his eldest brother, the Black Prince. By the time he began to take a leading role in national and international affairs, the king and his heir were both sick and close to death and John had no prospect of inheriting the crown as long as his infant nephew, the future Richard II, survived.

He could claim no spectacular military successes to boost his standing at home, and he could do little to halt the recovery of French fortunes on the continent, which cancelled out most of the gains achieved by the Treaty of Brétigny. He was, however, able to accumulate, largely through marriage, considerable lands and titles on both sides of the water.

John, the third son of Edward III by his wife, Philippa of Hainault, was born in 1340 in Ghent in the county of Hainault. At that time, it was anglicised as 'Gaunt', hence the prince's nickname John of Gaunt. He married Blanche, the daughter and, eventually, sole heir of Henry, Duke of Lancaster, the most powerful magnate in northern England, in 1359. At about the same time he began to take part in his father's military campaigns against the kings of France. In 1362, by which time the title 'duke of Lancaster' had fallen into abeyance, it was re-created by the king and bestowed on John.

His political importance really began in 1367 when the Black Prince made his fateful intervention in Castile in support of the deposed King Peter. It was largely thanks to John's generalship that a major victory was won at Nájera and Peter was restored to his throne. But from this point on, English fortunes on the continent fell into disarray.

John retreated to Aquitaine with his sick brother and the remnants of their army, only to be faced by a rebellion that had been stirred up by the French king Charles V. He was present at the sack of Limoges in 1370 that not only dented the Black Prince's reputation, but spread resentment throughout Aquitaine.

Meanwhile, Peter of Castile had been murdered, leaving two daughters. To gain allies against France, John and his younger brother married the two sisters in 1371 (Blanche had died in 1368). Through his new wife, Constance, John laid claim – unsuccessfully – to the crown of Castile and set up a court in exile. His pretensions ended in ignominious defeat when he attempted to invade Castile in 1387.

Affairs in England and Aquitaine were scarcely any better. The death of the Black Prince in 1376, followed by that of Edward III in 1377, left John as the effective leader of the English government. But

John the Lollard

Gaunt's support succoured the spread of the 'English heresy'

Among the enemies John of Gaunt managed to attract were several leaders of the Church. He shared the resentment felt by many concerning the privileges enjoyed by the clergy including tax exemption and freedom from prosecution in crown courts, the wealth of bishops and abbeys and the 'interference' of the pope in major Church appointments.

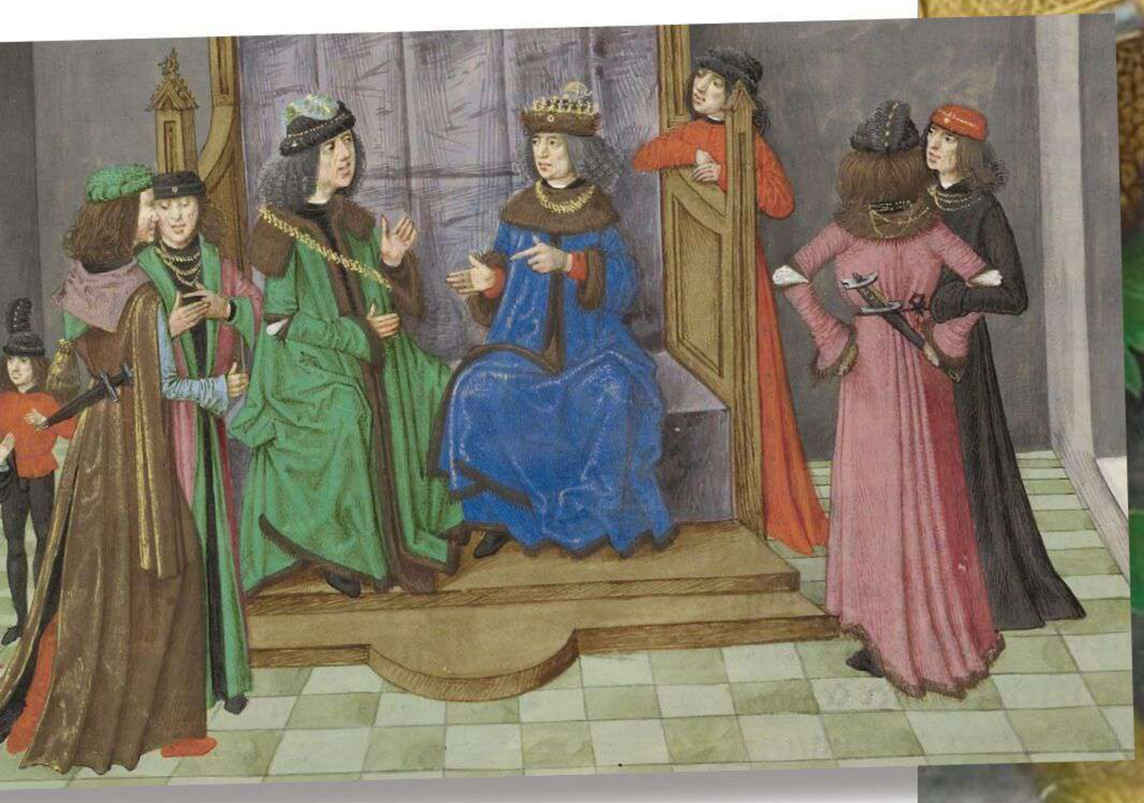
Someone else who felt strongly on these issues was the influential Oxford scholar and preacher John Wycliffe. His anticlericalism went much further, though, because he provided theological reasons for rejecting certain doctrines. He taught that the ultimate Church authority was the Bible, not the pope. "All Christians and lay lords in particular ought to know holy writ," Wycliffe declared, and, because the Bible only existed in Latin, he set about translating it into English.

The duke saw the propaganda value of Wycliffe's message and extended his patronage to him. When the bishop of London ordered Wycliffe to appear before him in 1377 to face herecy charges, he was alarmed to find John of Gaunt in the audience. The assembly broke up in confusion when the duke threatened to drag the bishop out by the hair if he tried to proceed. When the pope condemned Wycliffe, the government prevented any sanctions being carried out. The 'heretic' continued his work in peace.



John Wycliffe reading his translation of the Bible to John of Gaunt

Others joined in the work of translating the Bible. The unorthodox opinions spread and many groups of so-called 'Lollards' continued to meet in secret over the next 150 years. This 'English heresy' flourished despite persecution and eventually fed into the English Reformation.



John of Gaunt consulting with King John I of Portugal

he found himself opposed by the 'Good Parliament', so called because it was attempting to clean up the administration that was dominated by the unpopular John and Edward III's mistress, Alice Perrers.

The members resented the taxes being imposed for the continuance of a now-unpopular war. The duke's personal reputation was not enhanced by his building of a magnificent palace, the Savoy, beside the Thames outside London. When the Peasants' Revolt broke out in 1381, this building became the focus of the people's anger. A violent mob destroyed it and its contents entirely. The rebels vowed that they would take John by force and execute him, so he was obliged to go into hiding until the fracas was over.

In the short term, John won his stand-off with the Good Parliament. After the death of Edward the Black Prince, he had it dissolved and replaced by another assembly, inevitably known popularly as the 'Bad Parliament', which rescinded the reforms its predecessor had imposed and instigated a flat-rate poll (head) tax on everyone aged 14 and over.

In 1390, John was made duke of Aquitaine and he played his part in negotiations with France which led to a truce and, eventually, to the marriage of Richard II and Isabella of France, causing a cessation of hostilities. However, John was no more popular in Aquitaine than he had been in England – the nobles resented not being enfeoffed as directed to the crown.

As Richard II grew up, relations with his uncle fluctuated. He was suspected of wanting his own son, Henry, named as heir to the crown. Never a man to care much about popular opinion, John caused a scandal in 1396 by taking his long-term mistress, Katherine Swynford, as his third wife. The following year, he took the lead in suppressing a coup supported by his youngest brother, the duke of Gloucester.

The young king still felt himself in pawn to the elder members of his family, the dukes of Lancaster and York, especially as they opposed his lack of enthusiasm for continuance of the French war. In what seemed to him a clever political move, he sent John's son Henry into exile. John didn't long survive the disgrace as he died in February 1399. Soon afterwards, King Richard confiscated much of his property – an act that sparked the Wars of the Roses.

John as depicted on the Portuguese royal family tree created in 1530-34

CAROLINE WAR

THE LONG PEACE

Anglo-French hostilities ceased between 1359 and 1415 because each nation had its own problems

Words by Derek Wilson

Before we consider political events in the two nations, it's important to look at the underlying dislocation in Europe during what historian Barbara Tuckman has called "the calamitous 14th century".

The most devastating catastrophe was plague. The Black Death struck between 1348 and 1350, laying claim to the lives of 30 to 50 per cent of Europe's population, and there were minor outbreaks in the following years. The socio-political devastation was total. Labour shortages shifted the balance of power away from the nobility to the lower classes, who were then able to demand concessions and dissolve the feudal 'glue' that had held society together.

While the Church also suffered as a result of the Black Death, it had other problems. From 1309 to 1378, the papacy was a pawn to the kings of France after Pope Clement V moved his court to Avignon, and his successors resided there for more than a century.

When a non-French pope was elected in Rome in 1378, a 40-year schism followed with rival pontiffs competing for allegiance. By the beginning of the 15th century, the dire state of the Church led to the emergence of heretic groups like the English Lollards and Bohemia's Hussites – but this was only the tip of the iceberg of widespread discontent at the state of the Church.

The Hundred Years' War, meanwhile, was largely driven by its own momentum. Although there was mounting resentment at the taxes imposed to pay for it, neither side was prepared to suffer the humiliation of buying peace at the cost of accepting the status quo.

In Aquitaine, the magnates grew accustomed to changing sides in pursuit of their own self-interest. But the kings of England and France were, for much of this time, preoccupied with their own regional and dynastic problems, so a three-year truce was agreed in 1389. In 1396, it was extended for another 28 years and amity of the two nations was cemented by the marriage of Richard II and Isabella, daughter of Charles VI. By this point, Richard had no interest in the war and Charles was afflicted with madness.

"NEITHER SIDE WAS PREPARED TO SUFFER THE HUMILIATION"

England's underlying problem was social unrest. According to William Curtain's Chronicle,



The leader of the Maillotins Revolt is executed



“In the iiii year of King Richard’s reign, the commons arisen up in divers parts of the realm ... the which they called the hurling time.” This “hurling”, or commotion, erupted in many places.

For example, at York in November 1380, various malefactors among the commons drove the mayor, John Gysburn, out of the city, smashed their way into the guildhall with axes, seized one Simon Quixlay, forced him to become the new mayor and made all the members of the council swear allegiance to him. Such incidents were but preludes to the rising in southeast England known as the Peasants’ Revolt.

An attempt by commissioners at Brentwood, Essex, to gather the hated poll tax sparked a spontaneous reaction. Groups gathered there and in Kent, their ugly mood indicating the profound hatred they felt for the existing regime. They armed themselves with longbows, axes and knives and were not slow to use them – some had served in recent campaigns across the Channel and turned their martial skills against their own hated leaders.

“BUT RICHARD’S PROBLEMS WERE FAR FROM OVER”

They seized Rochester Castle, broke into houses and abbeys, opened jails and released the prisoners, and took grain from barns and cattle from fields to feed their swelling ranks. At Canterbury Cathedral, meanwhile, they ordered the monks to elect a new archbishop because the days of the present incumbent, Simon Sudbury – who, as chancellor, they blamed for the tax – were numbered.

They forced people everywhere to swear an oath to “King Richard and the true Commons” and those who refused were murdered or had their houses burned down. The Kentish host camped on Blackheath and sent a message to the king, who had taken refuge in the Tower, asking him to meet them.

The Pope’s Palace in Avignon



King Richard II meets with rebels of the Peasants' Revolt

Richard set out across the river with a flotilla of barges filled with men-at-arms but they beat a hasty retreat when they heard the rebels' chilling shouted demands: "Give us John of Gaunt" and "Give us Sudbury!" The people of London joined forces with the rioters and soon the host, led by Wat Tyler, set up camps on Tower Hill and outside the wall at Mile End.

It was at Mile End that the 14-year-old king confronted them. He agreed to most of their terms and, had Tyler's men dispersed quietly, history would probably have been very different. Instead, they entered the Tower, found Archbishop Sudbury and decapitated him, then went on a looting rampage through the city. So frightened were the citizens by this anarchic display that they switched their support to the king. In the ensuing fracas, Tyler was killed and the Peasants' Revolt finally came to an end.

But Richard's problems were far from over. As he matured, he tried to take up full kingly powers but that meant challenging his uncles' authority and taking for his advisers a group of young friends who created a boisterous and pleasure-seeking court.

The growth of Burgundy

Under a succession of able rulers, Burgundy became a powerful state rivalling France

When Philip, Duke of Burgundy, died at the age of 15 in 1361, John II of France successfully laid claim to the duchy and attempted to annex it to the French crown. This the Burgundian lords refused to accept, claiming that the two states were linked only by the 'accident' of being held by the same person and not by a legal union of lands and peoples. John was obliged to invest the dukedom in his youngest son, Philip – known to history as Philip the Bold.

Under Charles V, France fell upon evil days. After his defeat at the Battle of Poitiers, he was taken to England as a prisoner and died there in 1378. Philip became one of the regents during the minority of the young Charles VI and was locked in a power struggle with his regency 'colleague', Louis Duke of Orleans.

When Charles went mad in 1392, Philip became the effective ruler of France – but he was inordinately ambitious and always on the lookout to add to his ducal estates. Through marriage and the fortuitous death of relatives, he added territories in the Low Countries to his 'portfolio', a trend continued by his successors John the Fearless and Philip the Good.

Under these capable and canny rulers, Burgundy became not only one of the most powerful states in Europe and a major player in the renewed war between France and England, but also the most cultured state north of the Alps. It was the home of musicians such as Guillaume Dufay, painters of the stature of Jan van Eyck and textile workers who created some of the finest tapestries of the time.



Charles the Bold, as depicted in a contemporary portrait



The murder of Simon Sudbury

The clash between them and the senior nobles, or Lords Appellant, backed by parliament soon reached military proportions. An armed confrontation at Radcot Bridge, Oxfordshire, in 1381 led to two of Richard's favourites fleeing abroad where they died shortly afterwards. Richard's determination to seek revenge and to enjoy the freedom of action he believed to be his due as king may have been held in check by his first queen, Anne of Bohemia, whom he dearly loved. Certainly, his mood changed after her death from plague in 1394.

Carefully laid plans to rid himself of the Lords Appellant matured in the summer of 1397 and he arrested Gloucester along with the earls of Warwick and Arundel, who were tried and condemned to death (though Warwick's sentence was commuted to life imprisonment). Richard did not dare to deal with his uncle in the same way, so Gloucester was taken to Calais and murdered.

The king's second marriage to Isabella of France may have brought the prospect of lasting peace, but it weakened his dynastic position – he had no children and his new queen was still a child. The only potential challenge could come from John of Gaunt's son Henry.

In 1398, he sent Henry into exile and prevented him from returning to take up his inheritance after John's death. The following year, Henry returned with no more than a few hundred retainers but so unpopular had Richard become that men flocked



John of Gaunt's son claims the throne in 1399 as Henry IV



Richard II meets with the Duke of Gloucester

"HE SUFFERED A SERIOUS MENTAL BREAKDOWN IN 1392, KILLING FOUR KNIGHTS AND ATTACKING HIS BROTHER"

to Henry's standard. Richard's defeat was as complete as it was swift. He was imprisoned in various castles until he died – probably murdered – in Pontefract.

The history of France during these years was scarcely less turbulent. There, too, people were suffering from war-exhaustion and internal political tensions mainly caused by the Black Death and the papal schism. Charles V was largely successful in turning the tide of the war in France's favour and he regained most of the territory ceded to Edward III in the Treaty of Brétigny. However, once the crown's strong grip on the government was removed by his death, underlying tensions came to the surface.

Like Edward III, the French king was succeeded by a minor, Charles VI, and, as in England, this led to faction rivalries. In 1382 – only a year after the Peasants' Revolt in England – war taxation provoked uprisings in the two major cities of Paris and Rouen. In Rouen, the abbey was largely destroyed and the rebels raided the archives to make bonfires of public records.

In Paris, a mob of several thousand – known as the Maillotins because of the iron mallets, or 'maillets', they wielded – ransacked churches and the houses of the wealthy. The rising turned into a pogrom in which hundreds of Jews were murdered. Charles VI's attempts to negotiate an end to the unrest failed and only when the city was blockaded and its food supply cut off did the king regain control.

Popular opposition in Rouen also faded away but the failure of protest in these two cities did not stop widespread similar revolts throughout the country. The loss of revenue prevented an effective renewal of the war and Charles VI was happy to agree to an extension of the truce.

During Charles VI's minority, his government was ultimately controlled by his uncles – but the king escaped from their dominance in 1388. However, he suffered a serious mental breakdown in 1392, killing four knights and attacking his brother. Thereafter, Charles was afflicted with recurring bouts of insanity and believed himself to be made of glass, a rare but not unknown psychological disorder.

Two political parties emerged, each trying to exercise power in the king's name. One was led by Charles' brother, Louis, the duke of Orléans, and the other by his cousin John, the duke of Burgundy. In November 1407, John had his rival cut down in the street by a gang of assassins but it didn't make the situation any simpler. Instead, it led to the emergence of two armed forces, the Amagnacs and the Burgundians and a state of civil war that continued until 1435. John was, in turn, murdered in 1419. It was this state of internal chaos that enabled England's King Henry V to reactivate the old claim to the coveted throne of France by forming an alliance with the new Burgundian leader, Philip III.

LANCASTRIAN WAR

In the final stage of the war, from 1415 to 1453, it seemed that England were on the brink of success – but a vision from God turned the tide once more…

86 Charles VI
The hero of France whose bright future was stolen by insanity

88 Henry V
The king who came so close to getting it all

90 The road to Agincourt
After a long truce, Henry V's men took up their longbows and set sail for France

100 Treaty of Troyes
The Treaty of Troyes positioned England's Henry V and his heirs as the future kings of France

103 State of play 1435
The state of each nation's territories

104 Occupied Paris
How a combination of forceful conquest and extensive collaboration led to the occupation of Paris

106 Battle of Baugé
England's aura of invincibility was finally lost as a reckless advance saw their forces obliterated by a French and Scottish coalition

108 John, Duke of Bedford
Henry V's younger brother continued the English conquest of France with stunning success

112 Joan of Arc
Behind the legend of the humble peasant girl who helped defeat the English

120 The last stand
French determination and military superiority swept the English from Normandy and Gascony in the final phase of the Hundred Years' War

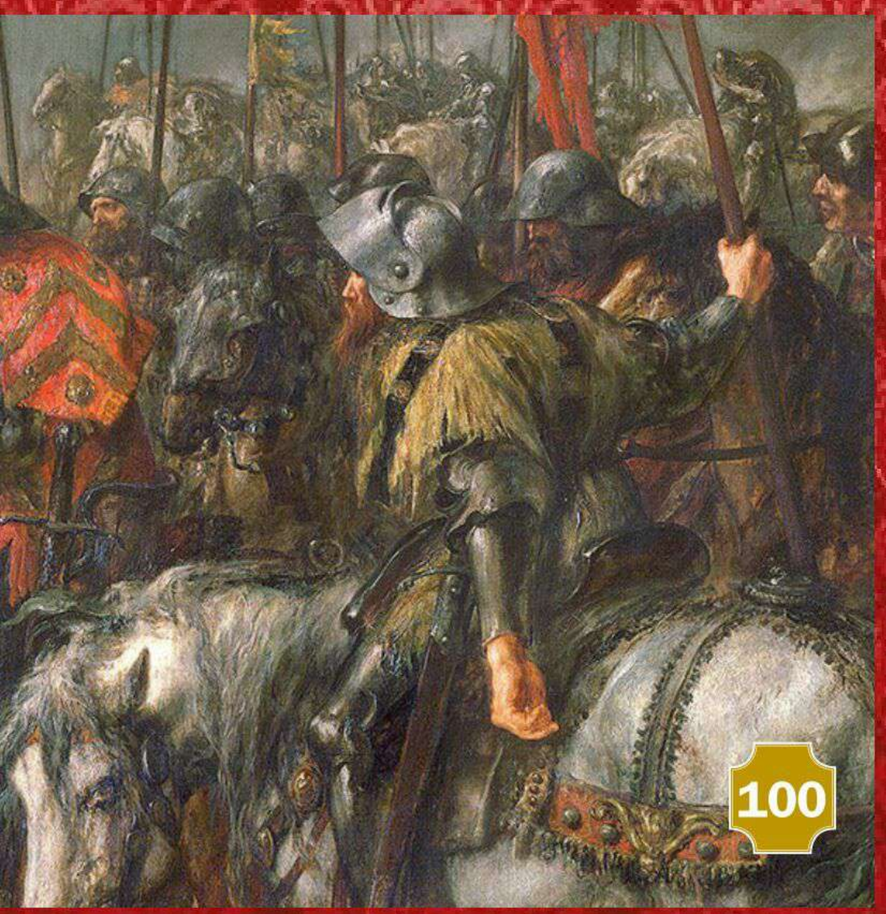
126 Treaty of Picquigny
Edward IV's peaceful treaty to finally end hostilities

127 State of play 1477
The state of each nation's territories



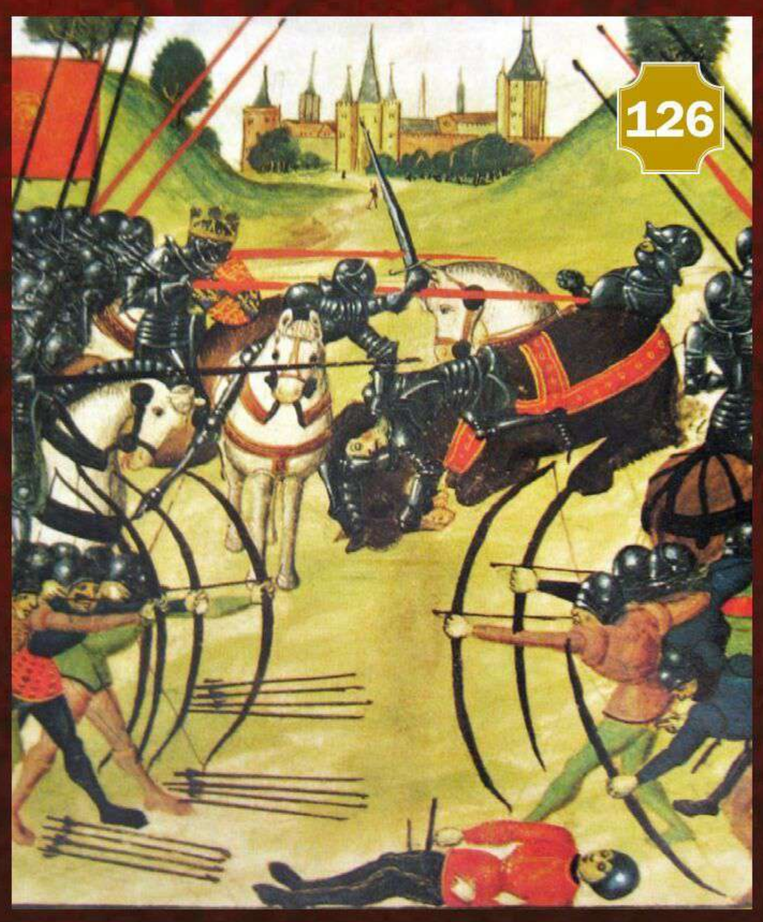


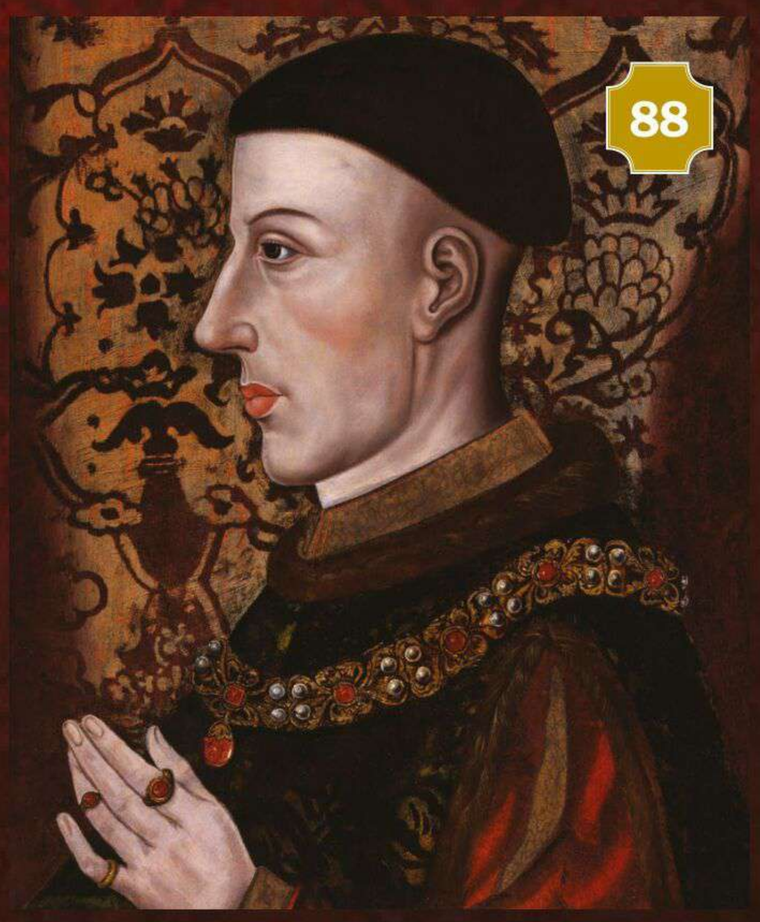



100


120


90


126


88



Charles had 12 children with his wife Isabeau of Bavaria, most of whom sadly died young

KEY PLAYER

CHARLES VI

The hero of France whose bright future was stolen by insanity

Ever since his birth, Charles VI was expected to be a great leader. His father had managed to reclaim France's lost territories from England and fill up her coffers. With the country finally on good footing after years of turmoil and instability, France desperately needed a king who would take advantage of these good fortunes and perhaps put an end to the Hundred Years' War once and for all. Charles seemed destined to be that king.

Charles did not know his father, the respected and wise Charles V, for long; he died when the boy was only 11 in 1380, but the prince was not expected to take control of the nation at such a young age. He was king, but it was with a regency shared among his four uncles. Although the boy could become king in his own right at 14, this long regency actually lasted until he was 21. It was decided that it would be better to focus on Charles' education to ensure he was the perfect man to lead France out of the darkness. In the meantime, his uncles and other trusted elites would rule as a group called the Council of 12.

Handsome and chivalrous, the prince cut a convincing figure. Although his father had been a subtle but wise king, Charles was very obviously impressive, winning tournaments and putting on inspiring performances at military expeditions. He was also a passionate and rather sentimental young man, generally very popular and well liked. However, upon coming into power he faced some hard truths. His uncles were not so honest about France's interests and had squandered the contents of the treasury Charles V had so painstakingly filled during his rule. In order to combat this, taxes were re-established, which prompted revolts in the provinces.

Charles' education had served him well, and he was well aware of how poisonous his uncles were to France. He ended the regency in 1388, ousting his uncles in the process. He then brought back his father's advisors, the Marmousets, who had proved their skill during his reign. Charles' actions steadily restored faith in the crown, and he quickly became known as 'Charles the Beloved' among the people. It seemed that everything was on track for Charles to become the hero he was born to be.

However, as is often the case in history, things did not quite go to plan. When Charles' friend was almost murdered in 1392, he set out on an expedition to catch the culprit. During the campaign



Charles suffered from a fever, which resulted in him attacking his companions. It took several soldiers to subdue him, and by the time he fell unconscious he had killed a knight and several other men. This event was entirely unprecedented. Charles had never shown any signs of mental instability, and he was in his mid-twenties when the attack occurred. The king was hurried back to Paris in chains for the safety of himself and others, with those closest to him hoping this was an isolated bout of insanity. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case.

Charles' mental instability did not only continue but got increasingly worse. The attack that occurred would be the first of 44 similar incidents, each more violent than the one before and often resulting in the murder of anyone who happened to be close to the king when it happened. These mental attacks could last for months at a time and were dispersed around periods of sanity, when the beloved, respected leader of the past would re-emerge.

Just one year after his first outburst in 1392, Charles suffered a period of mental illness that made him unable to recognise his own wife or even remember his name. In 1395 he claimed to be Saint George and was insistent that his family crest show a lion with a sword thrust through it. He was also known to run wildly through the palace, and he was even discovered nude on several occasions. In order to prevent him escaping the entrances were walled up.

Charles' ongoing instability had a disastrous impact on the affairs of France. With his authority weakened, ambitious dukes like those of Burgundy and Orléans jostled for power. The treasury was emptied and civil wars broke out among the rival factions. On top of this there was the growing threat posed by England.

Although Charles had managed to establish some semblance of peace with England before his descent into insanity, Henry V could not resist taking advantage of the chaos that now gripped France. The English king led an invasion of France that culminated in the battle of Agincourt in 1415. Regarded as one of England's greatest victories, the defeat crippled France and would usher in a new period of English success in the war. In 1420 Charles agreed that Henry would serve as his successor, thereby disinheriting his own son, who was approaching 17 years old. It also betrothed Charles' daughter, Catherine, to Henry.

Charles' mother also suffered from mental instability, which emerged after she gave birth to him



Charles would die two years later at the age of 53, his death plunging France into an inheritance battle. Henry VI, his infant grandson and king of England, was officially declared king of France with a coronation. However, Charles' disinherited son, with the support of Joan of Arc, claimed he was the true king, styling himself Charles VII.

Today, Charles' story is often regarded with some hilarity – the mad king who ran naked and thought he was made of glass. But in reality, the effects of Charles' mental instability and the lack of understanding at the time were devastating. Charles could have been a vision of light and hope for a country that desperately needed a way out of the darkness. Sadly for himself and his people's hope for a swift end to the ongoing turmoil this wasn't to be, and today the young hero that could have been is remembered as 'Charles the Mad'.

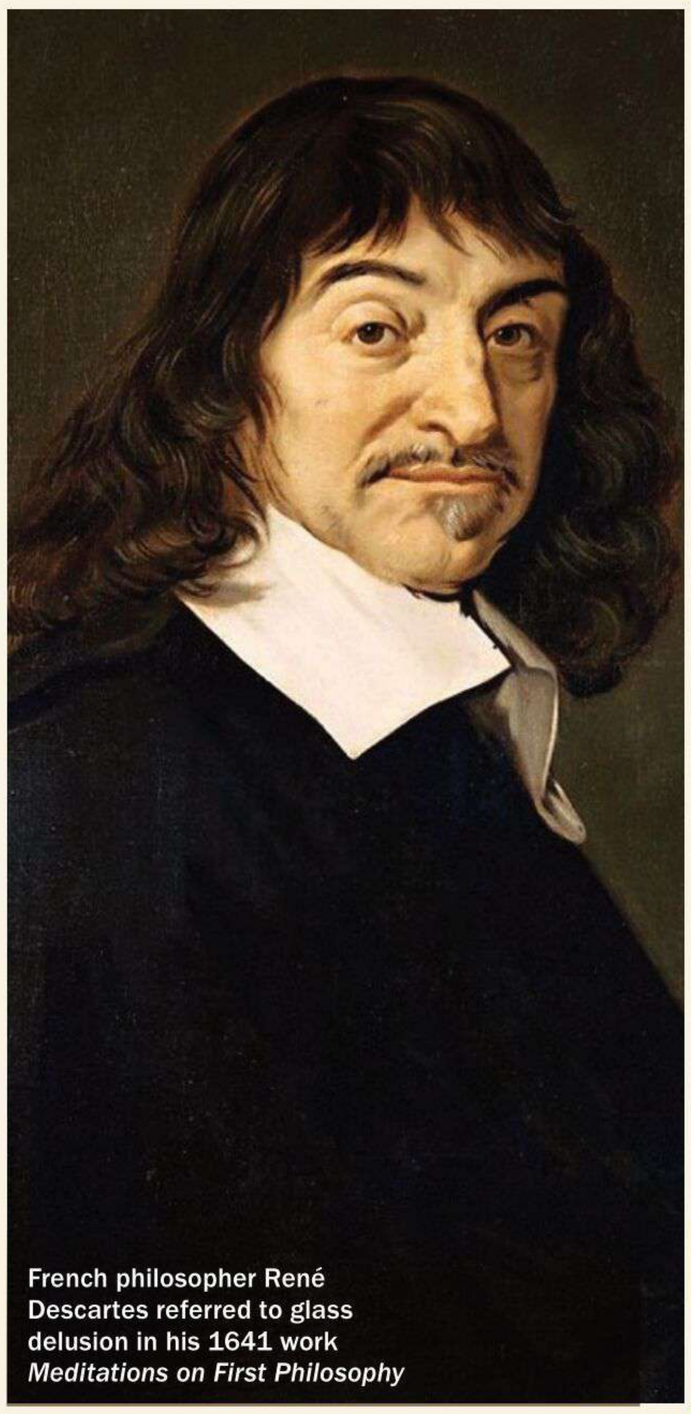
The glass delusion

How Charles began one of the most infamous disorders of the Middle Ages

One of Charles' most unusual claims during his periods of mental breakdown was that he was made of glass and that if anyone touched him he would break. As the king, his subjects seemed to go along with these delusions, sewing cast iron rods into his clothes so he would not shatter. Although this sounds highly strange and specific, Charles was not the only sufferer of this particular disorder. In fact, it became so widely reported that it was given a name – glass delusion.

The peculiar thing about this condition is that it was contained to the late Middle Ages and early modern period, with most cases reported from the 15th to the 17th century. Charles was one of the very first reported cases, and the disorder was largely concentrated in the wealthy and educated classes of Europe. It was so well known that a play called *The Glass Lawyer* was written about it, as well as a host of poems and novels.

After the 17th century the disorder seemed to all but vanish, with very few isolated cases diagnosed today, all of which binds this unusual mental disorder to a very specific time period, people and culture.



French philosopher René Descartes referred to glass delusion in his 1641 work *Meditations on First Philosophy*



KEY PLAYER

HENRY V

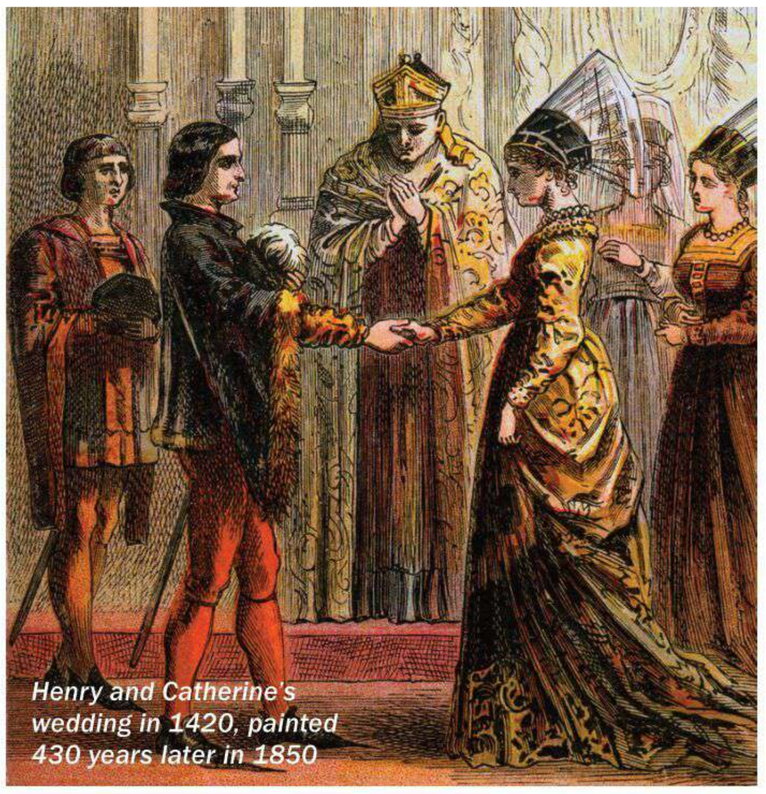
The king who came so close to getting it all

In a twist of irony, one of England's most loved and celebrated kings wasn't meant to rule. When the future Henry V was born in 1386 or 1387, King Richard II was on the throne. When Henry was a young boy, Richard held him hostage to ensure the good behaviour of his father. Unfortunately, Henry's father wasn't much inclined to behave well and usurped the English throne while the monarch was in Ireland in 1399, becoming Henry IV and making his son the Prince of Wales. Luckily for young Henry, Richard had grown fond of him and didn't cause him any harm.

The prince displayed military skill from an early age and fought bravely at the Battle of Shrewsbury in 1403, even receiving an arrow to the skull that found its mark just low enough that he wasn't blinded or killed. In fact, his leadership was a major factor in his side's victory. He also proved an able political leader, carrying out the duties of the high sheriff of Cornwall from 1400–04.

Henry struggled to get on with his father as he neared the end of his days. While the king was ill, Henry dominated the privy council and tensions were caused when father and son favoured different warring factions in France in the early 1410s. The king sided with the Armagnacs while the prince felt the Burgundians were in the right.

After his father's death, Henry came to the throne as Henry V in 1413. He spent the first portion of his reign suppressing a rebellion before it was announced to parliament on 9 April 1413 that he was going to reignite war with France in a bid to reclaim territory previously held by English kings. His war would being in 1415.



Henry and Catherine's wedding in 1420, painted 430 years later in 1850

Landing in France in August, Henry's forces soon laid siege to the fortress at Harfleur, which Henry took at a loss of one-third of his army to dysentery, which forced him to abandon plans to march on Paris. This success was closely followed by the Battle of Agincourt, a crushing victory for England and its king. The sovereign returned home briefly after his triumph and was welcomed by Londoners hailing him as a hero.

In 1417, he returned to France, this time taking Normandy and Caen by storm. Rouen followed suit in 1419 (the same year in which Henry formed an alliance with the Duke of Burgundy) after a lengthy siege, but this event revealed another side to the monarch, who was supposed to epitomise the chivalric Medieval knight. As the fighting intensified 12,000 residents of Rouen found themselves stuck in the no-man's-land between the city walls and the English forces, a number of which were old or infirm. Henry ruthlessly ordered that they be left to starve.

It was the Treaty of Troyes, signed in 1420, that would be Henry's crowning glory. He was named as next in line to the French throne (the French dauphin was effectively disinherited) and his heirs would follow him. As a bonus he was betrothed to Catherine of Valois, the daughter of Charles VI and his queen Isabeau.

Henry returned to England in 1420, marrying Catherine before the couple embarked on a royal progress around the country. Everywhere he went, the people's sentiments were the same: don't continue the Hundred Years' War. It had in fact been Henry's plan to end hostilities until the French dauphin began stirring up resistance.

Henry made his way back across the Channel in 1421 in a bid to salvage something from the reckage of England's defeat in the Battle of Baugé. He laid siege to the town of Meaux in October of the same year, but it wouldn't surrender until May



The wooden effigy on King Henry V's tomb in Westminster Abbey

A snowy disposition

When crowning a king, everyone looks out for omens

On 9 April 1413, Henry made his way to Westminster Abbey for his official coronation. In an unseasonable turn of weather, snow began to fall across London and Thomas Walsingham, the resident chronicler at St Alban's Abbey just before Henry's death, recalled two interpretations that spread through the country.

The prevailing theory was that England was doomed. The cold weather meant that the new king would be a cold-hearted sovereign and he would rule his subjects with a harsh mentality and an iron fist. On the other hand, there were some who looked on the bright side, taking the view that the snow meant vice would be frozen and new virtues would begin to flourish in the coming spring.

However, it is possible that Walsingham made all of this up. Writing just before the king's death, there is a chance that he was attacking the monarch who had started as a restorative and military force but who he now viewed as increasingly arbitrary and greedy.

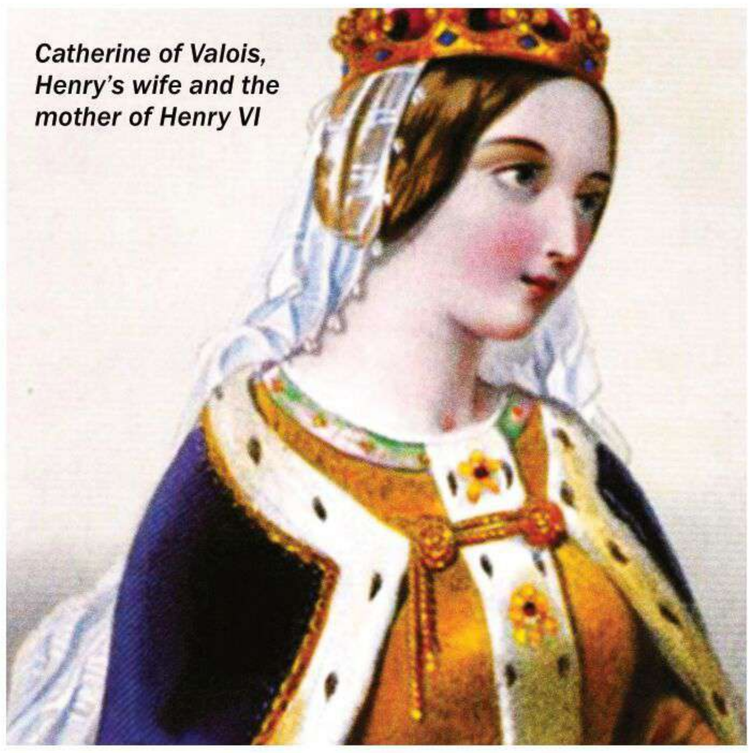
In early 1415, the dauphin's ambassadors presented Henry with tennis balls, an insult implying he was just a boy. He marched on France the same year

1422. While he was away, Catherine gave birth to the future Henry VI in December 1421, but the two would never meet. In August, the monarch fell ill and could no longer lead his armies into battle. Humiliatingly, the warrior king had to be carried everywhere in a litter.

As his life drew to a close, Henry's most pressing issue was the security of his two kingdoms, England and France. While he had a son back in England he was still only a baby, so Henry appointed his youngest brother Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, tasking him with the guardianship of the infant. Another of his brothers, John, Duke of Bedford, was charged with governing France. About three weeks after the onset of the illness, Henry passed away at Vincennes on 31 August 1422.

The king's body was embalmed and taken north to Rouen Cathedral, where it lay in rest. It was then ferried across the English Channel and interred at Westminster Abbey, close to the tombs of Edward the Confessor and his father figure, Richard II. He never lived to be crowned king of France – Charles VI died just a few weeks after him.

Henry has been remembered as a warrior king, leading his troops at Agincourt while Charles VI sat in his palace in Paris. Part of the reason his legacy has endured is due to William Shakespeare's depictions of him in *Henry IV Parts 1* and *2* and *Henry V*, but there is no denying that he came incredibly close to taking France.



Catherine of Valois, Henry's wife and the mother of Henry VI

Special tongs had to be created to remove the arrow from Henry's head at the Battle of Shrewsbury. They were carefully inserted nearly six inches to extract the shaft

DEFINING BATTLE

AGINCOURT

After a long truce, Henry V's men took up their longbows and set sail for France. The Hundred Years' War was about to reignite

By the summer of 1415, France had regained the majority of its land from Edward III's conquests. Aquitaine and Calais were still held by the English, but the cross-channel invaders had been almost completely driven out of Normandy and Flanders. Back in England, Henry V had been sat on the throne for two years. In that time he had become intent on reclaiming vast swathes of France for himself.

Taking his claim from his great-grandfather Edward, Henry initially offered the French 1.6 million Crowns to recognise English rule and ordered payment for the body of French King John II, who was captured at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356. Negotiations of these harsh terms predictably fell through, so Henry turned to military action.

As well as his burning desire for conquest, the warrior king had the ideal conditions for a successful invasion. Despite a recent plot to overthrow his rule, he had noble support, broadly there was domestic peace and, perhaps most importantly, unrest on the continent.

King of France Charles VI was prone to bouts of insanity, and in 1407 his troubled reign had led to the formation of rival factions in the Valois royal family. Louis, the duke of Orléans and brother of the king, had been murdered in Paris by the Burgundians, and civil war wasn't far away. France, after vanquishing the English in 1389, had descended into chaos. Henry was ready to strike.

THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT BY GRAHAM TURNER
FOR MORE OF GRAHAM'S FANTASTIC ARTWORK, VISIT WWW.STUDIO88.CO.UK

Even though the rules of chivalry stated that no battlefield should favour either side, the location of Agincourt clearly held an advantage for the English

The invasion begins

Setting off from Southampton, Henry was convinced that he could unite the thrones of England and France – he fervently believed that English ownership of the French crown was a birthright and God's will. He landed in Normandy on 14 August with 8,000 archers and 2,000 men-at-arms, who were contracted for 12 months' service. On arrival, Henry stepped onto shore first and fell to his knees, praying to God to give him strength against his enemies.

The English army's plan began with a siege of the nearby town of Harfleur, which had been an important centre of operations for raids on the English coast. The invasion started with a stumble. The siege took much longer than expected, and the French commune put up fierce resistance for more than a month. When Harfleur finally surrendered on 22 September, campaigning season was almost over. The plans to take Paris and Bordeaux were put on hold as the English sought to take refuge in Calais for the winter. Leaving their artillery, 1,200 men and most of their baggage train behind as a garrison, they marched 160 kilometres (100 miles) north towards Calais. Before setting off, Henry contacted the governor of Calais, Sir William Bardolph, asking him to safeguard his chosen crossing point of the River Somme, the same point that Edward III had traversed in 1346.

The French had been tracking the English since the fall of Harfleur, and Charles had summoned knights from every part of his kingdom to engage Henry's military. Letters were sent to every noble in the realm as the king amassed a huge army to fight off the invaders. All weapons and cannons were removed from town defence duties and put into the field of battle. Although he was instrumental in assembling the soldiers, the king would not take to the battlefield, and in his absence, Marshal Boucicault and Constable d'Albret would lead the French forces. The main French army was situated in nearby Rouen, but only watched as Henry marched uncontested towards Calais. His army was so large that no town or village dared oppose him, and he had no need to pillage as almost every town offered food to the king for his soldiers and horses.

D'Albret and his men were intent on engaging the English near to their own strongholds at

OPPOSING FORCES



ENGLISH

LEADER

Henry V

FORCES

Approximately 500 – 1,000 men-at-arms and 7,000 archers

GAME CHANGERS

The power and fire rate of the English longbow had been upgraded since the days of Crécy and was wielded by skilled English and Welsh archers



FRENCH

LEADER

Charles I of Albret

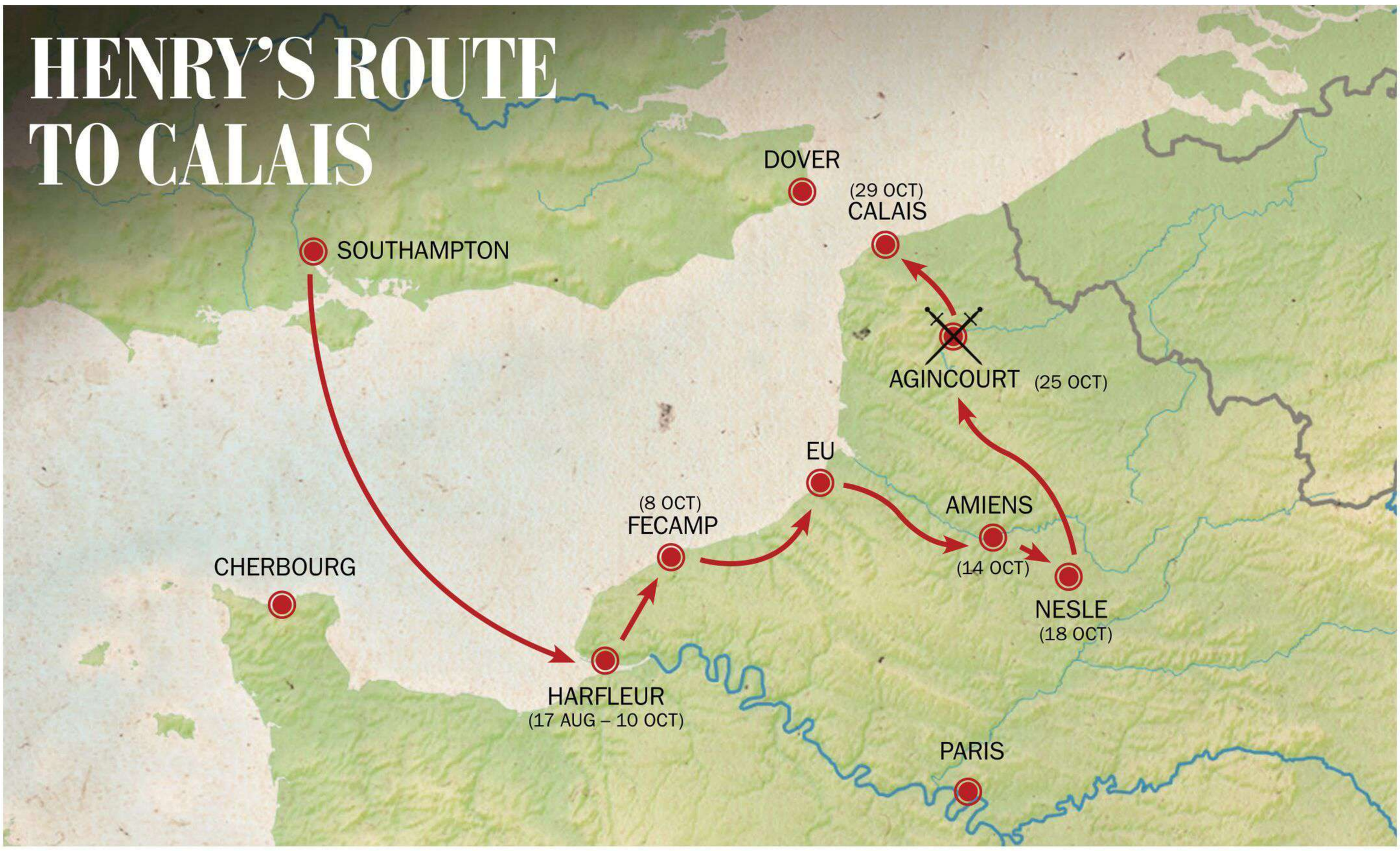
FORCES

Estimates range from 12-30,000 men-at-arms and knights, accompanied by crossbowmen and artillery

GAME CHANGERS

Overwhelming numbers of men-at-arms and knights could smash the English lines while being protected from arrows by tough plate armour

> *"ON ARRIVAL, HENRY STEPPED ONTO SHORE FIRST AND FELL TO HIS KNEES, PRAYING TO GOD TO GIVE HIM STRENGTH AGAINST HIS ENEMIES"*



Abbeville and Amiens. The scene of Edward III's emphatic victory at Crécy was near here, so the French were keen to get revenge on the same piece of land 69 years after their defeat. However, this idea didn't go to plan, and instead the French cut off the English at the Somme.

When Henry made it to the river estuary, there was no sign of Bardolph, and to his surprise, the French had barricaded the main crossing. Henry had to divert to another bridge, stretching both his resources and the resolve of his men. After finally crossing the river, they were met by the French merely 48 kilometres (30 miles) from Calais. Two days' march from safety and not far from the heavily fortified French town of Hesdin, appeals for a safe passage to Calais were refused. As the huge French army spilled over the horizon, there was now no way to avoid a pitched battle, and the chosen location was a forest between the villages of Tramecourt and Agincourt.

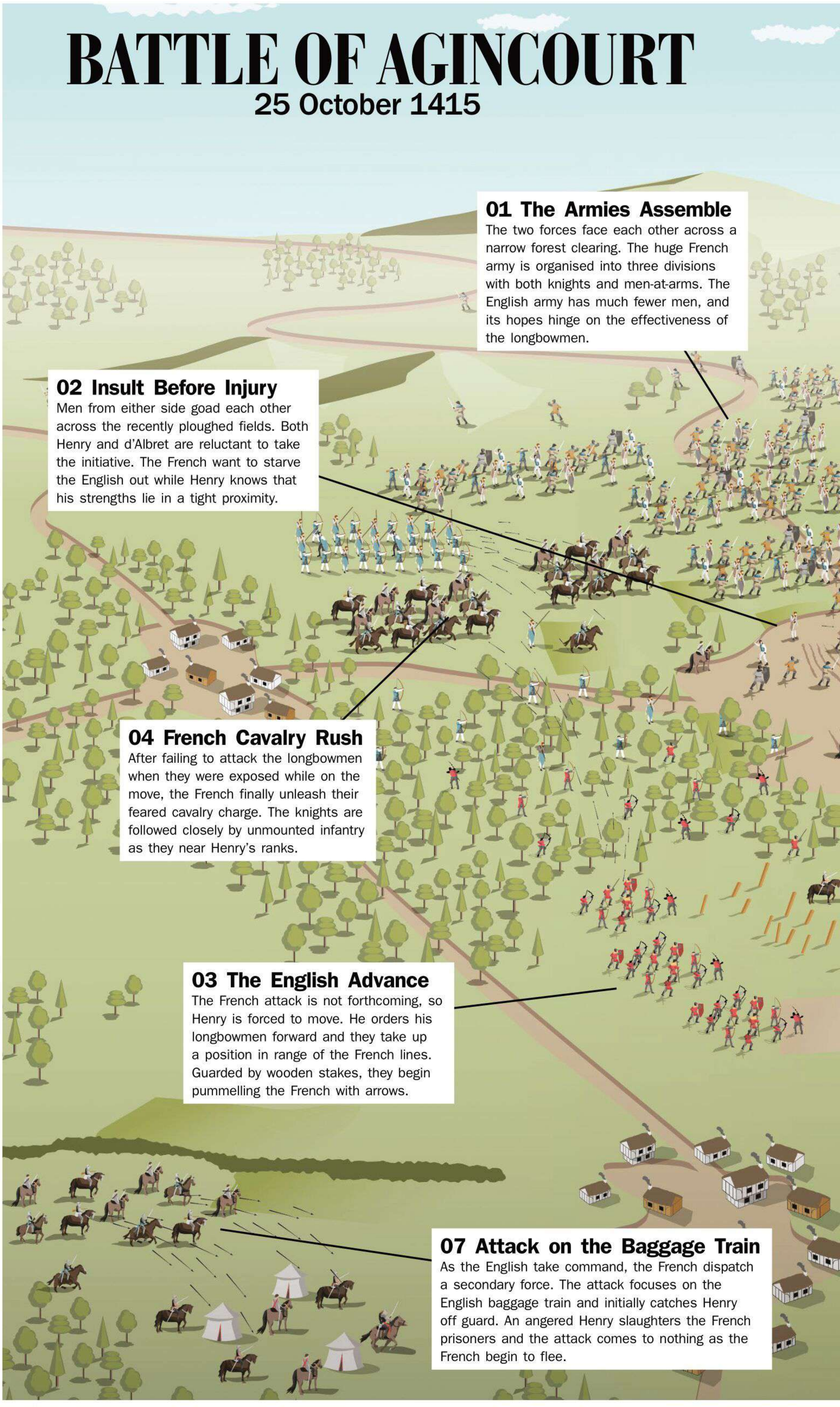
Amassing on the ridge

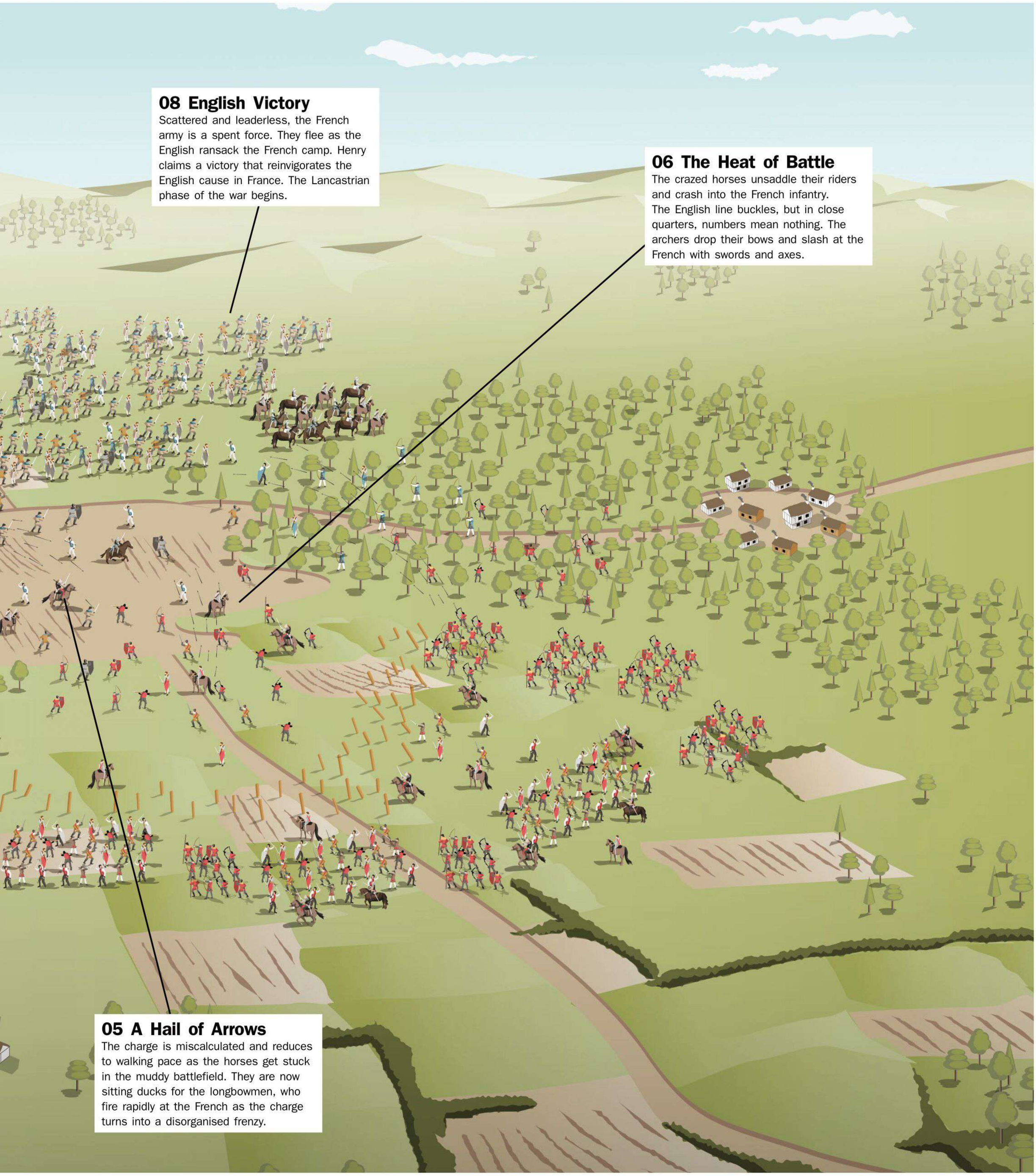
The exhausted and disease-ridden English army had marched for 17 days and was in no condition to fight. After having lived off nuts, raw vegetables and contaminated drinking water for days, the morale in the English camp on the eve of the battle was low. In contrast, the French camp was vibrant. New soldiers were arriving by the hour and they stayed up gambling and drinking, certain of victory the next day. So confident were some of the soldiers that they had even fashioned a cart especially for Henry's dead body to ride through the streets of Paris upon victory.

A cold and wet morning broke the next day. Winter was on its way and the freshly ploughed ground below the soldiers' feet resembled a mudpit after heavy overnight rain. The longbowmen took up their positions just before dawn on slight ridges overlooking both sides of the battlefield as well as interspersing themselves in the core of the infantry.

Although this was an English army, many of the longbowmen were Welsh. The longbow was first used in great numbers in Wales and some of the finest archers in the entire army came from there. The archers were joined by 500 men-at-arms who stood nervously in rank and file. Many of them were ordinary men, not seasoned veterans of battle, and

"THE LINES WERE SUCH A MESS THAT FALLEN TROOPS WERE CRUSHED DOWN INTO THE MUD, UNABLE TO RISE UP AGAIN DUE TO EXHAUSTION"





08 English Victory

Scattered and leaderless, the French army is a spent force. They flee as the English ransack the French camp. Henry claims a victory that reinvigorates the English cause in France. The Lancastrian phase of the war begins.

06 The Heat of Battle

The crazed horses unsaddle their riders and crash into the French infantry. The English line buckles, but in close quarters, numbers mean nothing. The archers drop their bows and slash at the French with swords and axes.

05 A Hail of Arrows

The charge is miscalculated and reduces to walking pace as the horses get stuck in the muddy battlefield. They are now sitting ducks for the longbowmen, who fire rapidly at the French as the charge turns into a disorganised frenzy.

THE LONGBOWMAN

Drawn from both England and Wales, longbowmen were the backbone of Henry's army



ARROWS
Many different types of arrowhead could be used with a longbow. The simplest was the bodkin point, and the majority of arrows could penetrate even the very toughest plate armour.

THE LONGBOW
Made out of yew, ash, oak or birch, the longbow originated in Wales. By the time of Agincourt, it was one of the most feared weapons on the Medieval battlefield.

ARMOUR
Unlike the men-at-arms, the longbowmen had very little armour except for a boiled leather jacket and occasionally a helmet. The tactics of an archer were based around being nimble and light-footed.

SECONDARY WEAPONS
When engaged in close-quarters combat, the longbowmen would drop their bows and fight with swords, axes and clubs. This was a last resort as archers worked best at a distance.

Right: Due to their limited armour, longbowmen were often positioned behind barricades or interspersed among troops with superior protection

TRAINING
The longbow would be nothing if it wasn't in the hands of a trained archer. All sports except archery were banned on Sundays and the most talented were drawn into the English Army.

TACTICS
Longbowmen were vulnerable to cavalry so would attack from range and flank the enemy. Each archer carried 60-70 arrows each, enabling up to about six minutes of continuous fire.

THE AGINCOURT CAROL

Deo gracias anglia
redde pro victoria.
Our kyng went forth to Normandy
Wyth grace and myth of chyvalry
Þer God for hym wrouth mervelowsly
Qwerfore ynglond may cal and cry deo gracias.
Deo gracias anglia
redde pro victoria.
He set a sege for sothe to say
To harflu toune wyth ryal a ray
Þat toune he wan and mad a fray
Þat fraunse xal rewe tyl domysday deo gracias.
Deo gracias anglia
redde pro victoria.
Than went hym forth owr kyng comely
In achyncourt feld he fauth manly
Thorw grace of god most mervelowsly
He had both feld and vyctory deo gracias.
Deo gracias anglia
redde pro victoria.
Ther lordys eerlys and baroune
Were slayn and takyn and þat ful soun
And summe were browth in to londoune
Wyth ioye and blysse and greth renoune
deo gracias.
Deo gracias anglia
redde pro victoria.
Almythy god he kepe our kyng
Hys pepyl and al hys weel welyng
And 3eve hem grace withoutyn endyng
Þan may we calle and savely syng
deo gracias.
Deo gracias anglia
redde pro victoria.

they watched on as the French amassed opposite them with about six times as many men they had within their own ranks.

King Henry, in crown and plumed bascinet, constantly encouraged his men and would fight shoulder to shoulder with them as he took charge of the centre, with Sir Thomas Erpingham manning the right and Lord Camoys leading the left. Thick forest enclosed both armies into a confined space of about 900 metres (2,950 feet) wide but the French were sure that there was still room for their cavalry to flank and ultimately encircle the English, striking the deadly archers from all directions. Their army was divided into three lines: the vanguard, the main body and the rearguard. One was mounted and two were on foot, with d'Albret and Boucicault leading the vanguard with the dukes of Bourbon and Orléans.

The French knew the threat the longbowmen posed and had upgraded their armour since the days of Crécy. They now wore thick steel plates with visor helmets. Each knight had a coat of arms proudly emblazoned on his shield, and the French battle standard, the Oriflamme, flew on flags above them. In response, the English soldiers carried a bow that was much more powerful than the one employed during the conquests of Edward III. Two-handed swords were wielded by the higher classes of infantry on both sides, but the majority carried one-handed swords or lances and even blunt weapons like maces, hammers and clubs.

"THE LONGBOWMEN IN THE CENTRE HAMMERED STAKES INTO THE GROUND, FORTIFYING THEIR POSITION IN A TACTIC LEARNED FROM PREVIOUS CONFLICTS IN THE WAR"

Henry makes his move

Both sides spat insults at each other, as commanders became reluctant to make the first move. The French were unwilling to advance, as Boucicault in particular knew the English would starve if they went much longer without food. Henry was all too aware of this and finally rolled the dice as he ordered his longbowmen forward.

Kneeling and kissing the ground, the archers advanced until they were about 238 metres (750 feet) from the enemy lines. A trained archer could penetrate armour and kill or wound a target from up to 220 metres (721 feet) away. The French had already made their first error by not attacking the archers when they broke ranks and moved forward. D'Albert and Boucicault were experienced soldiers but lacked the authority and respect that a king like Henry would receive from his men.

Unfortunately for the French, their king, Charles VI, was still in Paris, unable to lead his army due to his failing mental health. Back at Agincourt, several units of archers had secretly tracked through the forest surrounding the battlefield and into the nearby village of Tramecourt, creating another angle of attack for the English. Continuing undeterred, the longbowmen in the centre hammered stakes into the ground, fortifying their position in a tactic that they had learned from previous conflicts in the war. At 11am, on the king's order, the archers opened fire. In response, the French cavalry charged, followed by men-at-arms.

The longbowmen first shot galling arrows to purposely wound and disorientate the French ranks before switching to standard bodkin-point arrowheads. The combination of the narrow, muddy battlefield and the severely undermanned charge saw the French knights slaughtered by the hail of English arrows, as their frightened and injured horses became uncontrollable. Any horses that got even remotely close were impaled on the stakes, and any that turned back crashed into the oncoming men-at-arms, blunting the attack. With the battleground now even more churned up by the horses' hooves, the foot troops moved forward



In the French ranks, nobles jostled for space so they could have their coat of arms displayed at the battle. The result was a chaotic mess

painfully slowly. The area was so narrow that the French crossbowmen and artillery could not support their now-isolated foot soldiers, as a wall of arrows struck the exhausted infantry.

The French attack had just enough momentum to reach the enemy ranks, and at first the English line began to buckle under the strain. Knowing that leaving the narrow battlefield would result in annihilation, the English rallied as the longbowmen dropped their bows and took up swords and axes. The French men-at-arms were protected by thick plate armour, but the nimble archers had purposely shortened their swords and lances, and would slash at any unprotected area, while the huge amount of French troops struggled to swing their powerful broadswords effectively. The lines were such a mess that fallen troops were crushed down into the mud, unable to rise up again due to exhaustion and the 50-kilogram (110-pound) weight of the armour. Any Frenchman who fell drowned in the mud as his fellow soldiers trampled over him.

Within 30 minutes of fighting, two of the three French lines had been completely destroyed. The duke of Alençon lay dead in the mud as did the French commander d'Albret. On the English side, the dukes of York and Suffolk had been killed, but Henry was still alive and so was his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, who Henry had defended valiantly in the heat of battle.

Failed encirclement

Having witnessed the carnage, the decision was made for Isambart d'Agincourt and Robert de Bournonville, men with local knowledge, to target the rear of Henry's army. It was here that French prisoners the English had captured during their invasion were located. A small force of peasant fighters and knights quickly overwhelmed the limited English defenders and plundered the English camp, taking horses and even a royal crown in the process.

Enraged, and also concerned at the possibility of a mass French counterattack, Henry ordered the killing of all his prisoners except only the highest-ranking nobles. The English men-at-arms refused, as this would clash with their chivalric code, so the archers took on the job, killing them in cold blood. There were more prisoners than men in the whole English army, so this knee-jerk reaction was effective in nullifying any possibility of an uprising but severely lessened the opportunities for ransom after the battle.

"THE ENGLISH MEN-AT-ARMS REFUSED AS IT CLASHED WITH THEIR CHIVALRIC CODE, SO THE ARCHERS TOOK ON THE JOB, KILLING THEM IN COLD BLOOD"

On the frontline, a 600-man counterattack led by the Counts of Marle and Fauquemberghes had been a disaster. This setback was the final straw, and the remaining French line withdrew. 8,000 French (including one third of the nobility present at the battle) had been killed while the English dead only numbered in the low hundreds. Against all the odds, the English had won the battle.

Aftermath

Ecstatic after their victory, the English broke into song, chanting early versions of the Agincourt Carol and other traditional celebratory tunes. The series of French mistakes had proved fatal and the location of the battle had essentially forfeited their numerical advantage. If the full strength of the French cavalry had charged at the English, even the skilled longbowmen, who could fire up to six arrows a minute, and the courage of the men-at-arms wouldn't have been able to hold them off.

Henry's army sacked the French camp and stripped the dead of everything of worth as soldiers fled in all directions. That night, the king held a banquet in nearby Maisoncelles, which was served by captured and now-humiliated French knights. After the emotion of the victory had died down, the weary men were unable to march on Paris, voicing concerns over a lack of siege weapons, and they withdrew back to the safety of Calais on 29 October. Despite the unlikely victory at Agincourt, minimal territory had been gained and Charles VI was still in power, but the French military had been broken on the field. Harfleur was now an English-controlled town and would be an effective launching pad for Henry's second invasion of Normandy in 1417. Burgundy, meanwhile, still refused to strike a deal with the House of Valois, as the French kingdom's enemies began to stack up.

Despite the gains, Henry sailed back to England after his nobles voiced fears over the possibility of a costly winter campaign. He returned to a hero's welcome, and after a few more years of successful campaigning, would draw up the Treaty of Troyes in 1420, recognising him as regent and heir to the French throne. The failures of Agincourt had made the French hesitant to fight pitched battles, which contributed to English victories at the 1416 Battle of the Seine and the 1418 siege at Rouen.

Henry's French conquests were successful, but the strain on his kingdom's finances was beginning to tell, and it would eventually signal the beginning of the end for the Lancastrian monarchy in his later years.

The king died in 1422, meaning he never officially became the king of France. After his sudden death, English fortunes on the continent took a turn for the worse, and when the Wars of the Roses broke out in England, the control of France slipped from the new teenage king Henry VI. The famous victory at Agincourt was now in the past and the era of Joan of Arc and the return of French military power was at hand.



ROYAL STRATEGY

DR MATTHEW BENNETT DISCUSSES THE KING'S COMMAND AND THE FRENCH HESITATION

Dr Matthew Bennett recently retired after a full career as senior lecturer at The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He is a Medieval military historian and contributed the battle account in the catalogue for the Agincourt 600 exhibition at the Tower of London. His publications include Agincourt: Triumph Against The Odds (Osprey, 1991) and several specialist studies of English archery tactics used in the Hundred Years' War.

How did Henry V's campaign plan in 1415 differ from Edward III's Crécy campaign in 1346?

There is no doubt that Henry was inspired by the achievements of his great-grandfather. Edward had invaded Normandy via the Cherbourg peninsula, sacked Caen and advanced to just north of Paris, challenging the French king to battle. He then withdrew northwards to Poitou where he was victorious at Crécy. The following year he besieged the bridgehead port of Calais. In contrast, Henry landed at Harfleur, in the mouth of the River Seine, capturing it after a bitter siege and then marched to Calais.

Was the planned expedition popular at court and among the nobility?

Generally, the war against France, fought in France, was desirable to the military aristocracy because it offered opportunities for glory, plunder and lands. Richard II's unpopular peace policy had been an important factor in Henry Bolingbroke's 1399 usurpation. Young Henry had proved his valour in his first battle at Shrewsbury in 1403, aged only 16, where he was wounded in the face by an arrow. As king, Henry V won support from the nobility, but also the financiers of the City of London, and its lord mayor, Richard Whittington, who recognised a good investment.

How did the long siege of Harfleur affect Henry's objectives and plans?



The 12,000-strong English army landed in mid August and a month-long siege ensued. The garrison was a bare 300 men, but the town of Harfleur was well fortified by walls and 24 towers, together with ditches and a moat on the seaward side. Siege artillery, both gunpowder and traction, pounded the main gate, which was protected by a wooden bulwark. The unsanitary conditions of the siege lines caused an epidemic of dysentery, which killed or incapacitated some 2,000 of the English, including its leaders. When Harfleur finally surrendered on 18 September, it seemed that Henry's plans had suffered a serious check.

What should we make of the story that Henry originally intended to march south to Bordeaux and Guyenne, and what would have happened had he done so?

The English Crown also held lands in Aquitaine, so marching south would have emphasised the link with these ancient possessions. However, it was late in the year for campaigning and it would have required significant logistical support. Known as a chevauchée, such expeditions could have a symbolic effect, but in the latter years of Edward III's reign, there had been several disastrous attempts of this nature. The French had learned not to confront English armies, but to harry them and deny them provisions, so the risk for Henry was too great.

Why did Henry march on land to Calais rather than take a safer passage by sea?

This was indeed the question that Henry's chief advisers asked the king! They feared that the English army would be caught 'like sheep in fold' as French forces combined against it. The answer must be that Henry was making a statement about his right to march wherever he wanted in a country he claimed that he had the right to rule. He may also have contemplated winning a decisive action against the French, as Edward had done 69 years earlier.

Were there any skirmishes with the French en route to Agincourt? If so, were any of them significant?

The French, who had not attempted to relive Harfleur, merely shadowed the English line of march when the army set out. They relied on blocking the bridges and fords of the River Somme. Faced with this obstacle, Henry was forced to lead his men south east, away from the direct route to Calais, and the English supplies soon ran out. He did manage to cross near Péronne, which was a week's march from his destination, but the French still avoided combat.

Did Henry ever consider cutting his losses and turning back? Were there any mutinies or desertions?

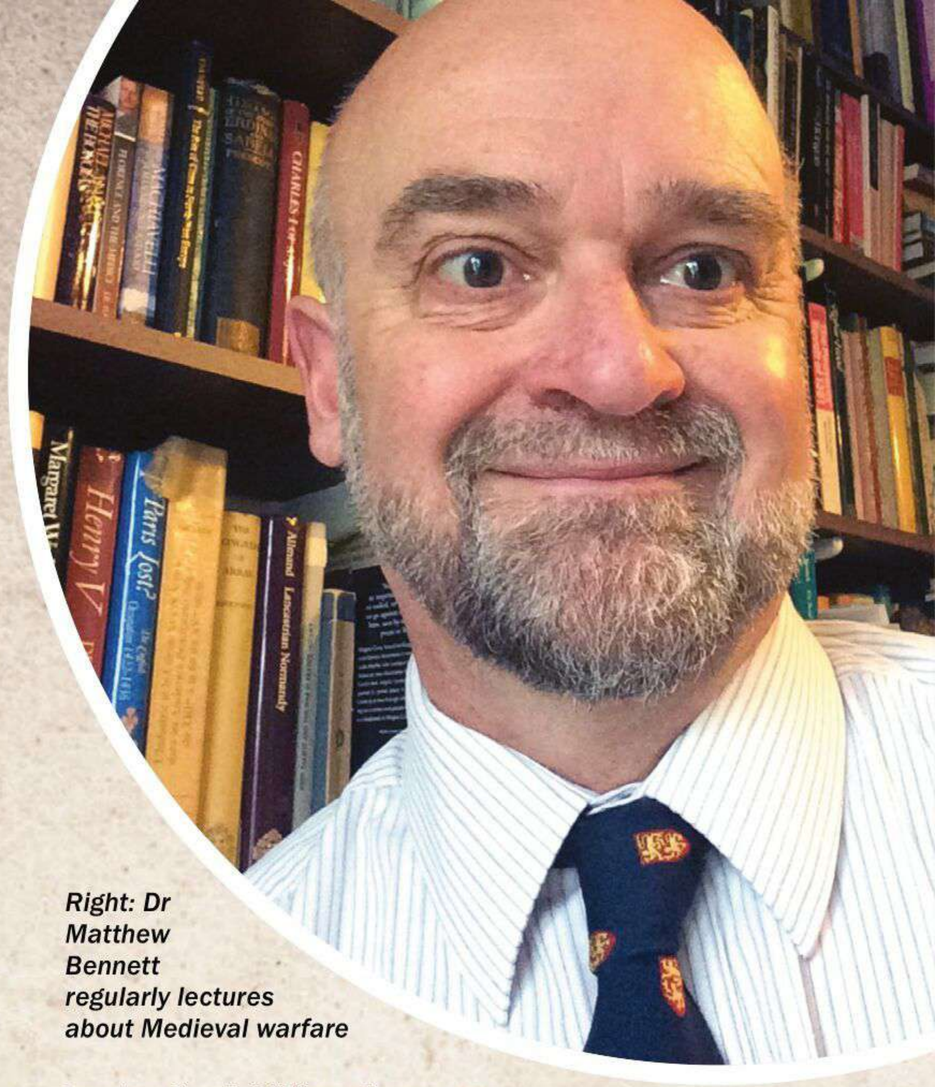
The sources do not really provide an answer. In the light of the stunning victory at Agincourt, any dissension may have been written out of the record. The churchman who wrote an eyewitness account of the campaign, The Deeds Of Henry V, does admit that the soldiers were often uncertain and frightened. However, the king kept strict discipline, enforcing regulations and hanging pillagers. Also, the risk of leaving the army and being at the mercy of the enraged French peasantry was probably greater than keeping together.

Why were the French, with a much larger army and home advantage, so hesitant to engage the English?

This is the key question. First, French strategy remained non-confrontational. Second, they hoped to wear the English down before challenging battle. Third, it may be that they did not actually have a huge advantage. This is certainly the argument of Professor Anne Curry in her book Agincourt: A New History. Her study of the English documentary records indicates that the army may have been 9,000 strong. In contrast, France was in the midst of a civil war, with a mad king and rival Burgundian and Armagnac factions. Their commanders were bitterly divided and it may be that all their forces did not come up to fight. They had a greater number of fully armoured men-at-arms, but their botched battle plan meant that they failed to utilise them effectively.

What sort of condition was the English army in on the eve of Agincourt?

The English set out with a week's rations, but had been on the road for 16 days. They had subsisted on nuts, berries and dirty water. Anne Curry points out that although no source states that they were suffering from diarrhoea, it seems likely. The archers are described as rolling down their hose (leg coverings) to the knee. This strongly suggests that their bowels were running. They may well have been weakened, but they were both desperate and inspired by a charismatic leader, which was enough to win the day.



Right: Dr Matthew Bennett regularly lectures about Medieval warfare

Images: Alamy; Getty; Thinkstock

TREATY OF TROYES

Ostensibly ending the Hundred Years' War, the Treaty of Troyes positioned England's Henry V and his heirs as future kings of France



In August 1415, King Henry V renewed the lingering English claim to the throne of France and the series of conflicts that have collectively come to be known as the Hundred Years' War. His invasion and subsequent military campaign culminated with a crowning victory at the Battle of Agincourt, about 45 miles south of Calais, on 25 October. The French army was shattered, and further reversals of French fortune compelled King Charles VI to begin negotiations.

By 1418, John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy, an ally of the English, had occupied the French capital of Paris and begun spreading the rumour that the current heir to the throne was illegitimate. The 17-year-old dauphin Charles, he asserted, was the product of an illicit love affair between his mother Isabeau of Bavaria, queen by virtue of her marriage to Charles VI, and her brother-in-law Louis, Duke of Orléans. A year after occupying Paris, John was assassinated by his political opponents, shortly after which his son Philip the Good further formalised ties with England and became involved in the treaty negotiations.

"A YEAR AFTER OCCUPYING PARIS, JOHN WAS ASSASSINATED BY HIS OPPONENTS"

The result of the lengthy parlay was the Treaty of Troyes, signed in the French city on 21 May 1420. Charles VI capitulated on several points, the most prominent of which was the supposed final settlement of the question of succession to the throne of France.

The treaty read in part, "…The power and authority to govern and to control the public affairs of the said kingdom shall, during our lifetime, be vested in our son, King Henry, with the advice of nobles and wise men who are obedient to us, and who have consideration for the advancement and honour of the said kingdom…"

In 1435, Charles VII and Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, concluded the Treaty of Arras, ending the Burgundian alliance with England

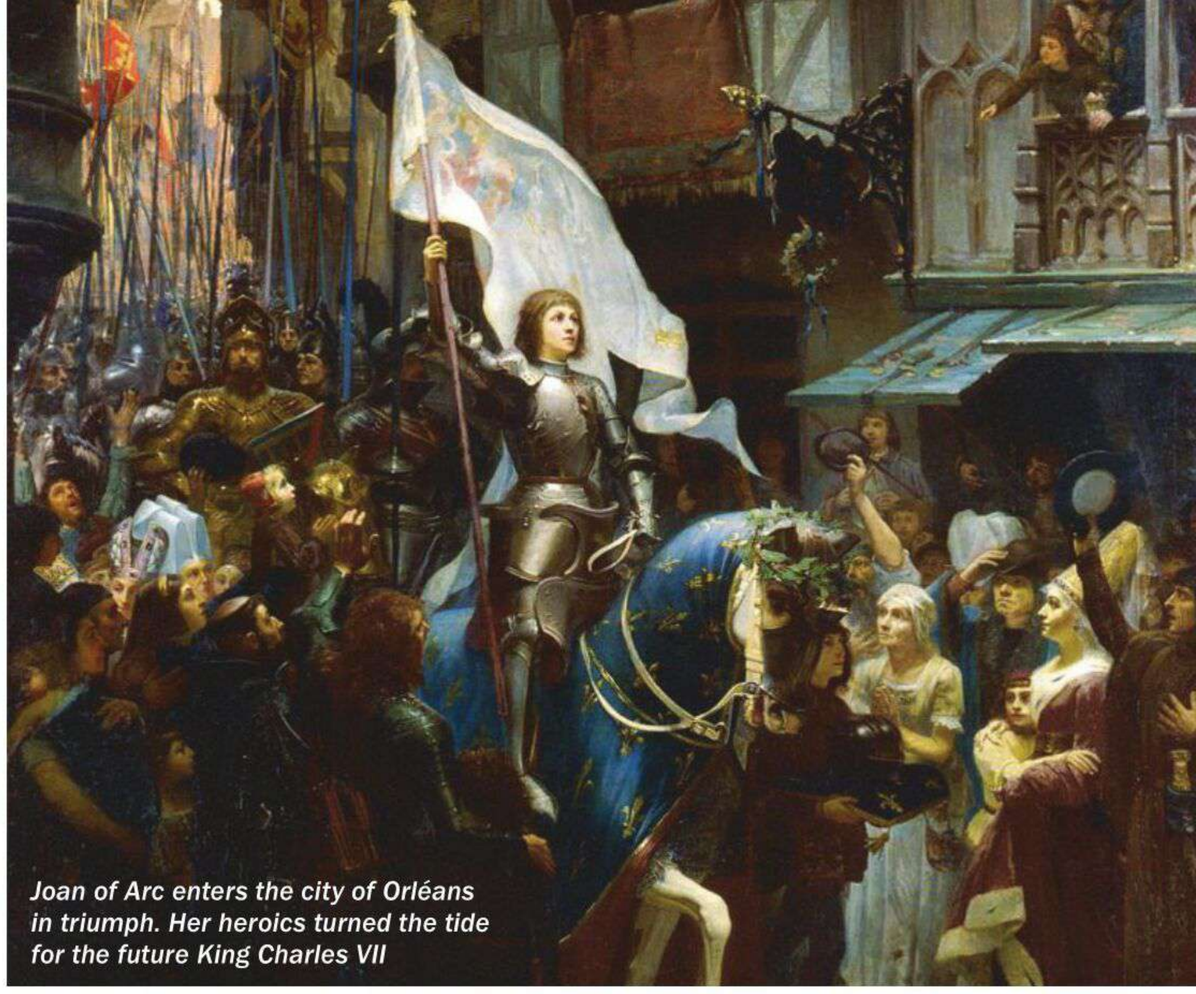
This painting by 19th-century artist Sir John Gilbert is titled 'Morning of the Battle of Agincourt, 25 October 1415'



Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, followed his father John The Fearless as an early ally of England



King Philip VI of France was compelled to negotiate with the English and their Burgundian allies after the Battle of Agincourt



Joan of Arc enters the city of Orléans in triumph. Her heroics turned the tide for the future King Charles VII

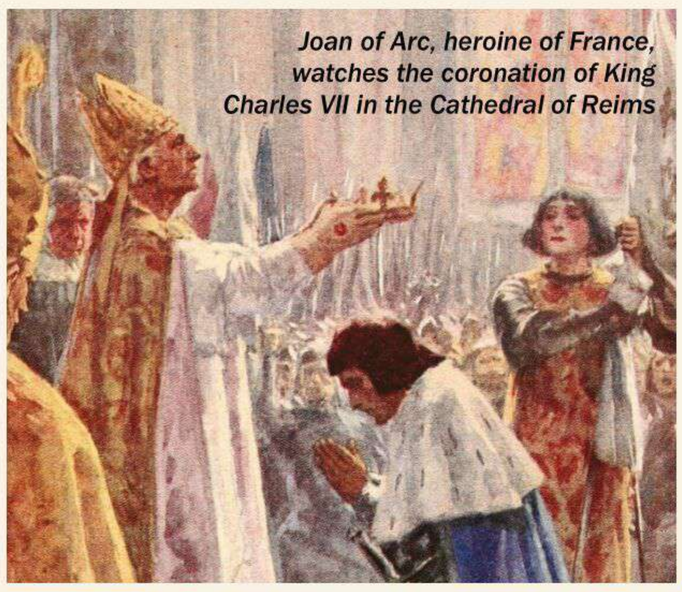
Traitor to victor

From disinheritance, Charles VII rose to restore French prestige, curb the influence of England and end the Hundred Years' War

Labelled a traitor, King Charles VII refused to accept disinheritance through the Treaty of Troyes. He hesitated and then found the resolve to reach his coronation in 1429. From his father's death in 1422, Charles VII ruled at least a portion of France for 39 years. During this time he initially held an itinerant court at various locations south of the Loire River.

The king's military fortunes improved in the spring of 1429, and his army achieved final victory in the Hundred Years' War in 1453, expelling the English from France with the exception of the port of Calais. For this accomplishment Charles VII became known as 'the Victorious' or 'the Well-Served'.

Perhaps his greatest regret was estrangement from his son, the dauphin and future King Louis XI, who demanded greater authority as the royal heir and openly rebelled against Charles. Louis claimed the throne upon his father's death at the age of 58 on 22 July 1461.



Joan of Arc, heroine of France, watches the coronation of King Charles VII in the Cathedral of Reims

The reference to Henry V as the French king's 'son' arose from other provisions of the Treaty of Troyes. Henry V was to wed Catherine of Valois, daughter of Charles VI, and their heirs were to inherit the French crown upon the deaths of both Henry and Charles. During the lifetime of Charles VI, who was prone to intermittent bouts of insanity, Henry would rule France as regent. The dauphin was summarily disinherited amid accusations that he had ordered the assassination of John the Fearless and in the vain hope that at his expense the years of strife would be finally ended. This supposed "enormous crime" was enough to deprive him of the right of accession. The charge that he had been born of an extramarital affair was left out of the discussion to avoid embarrassing Charles VI.

The French assembly, the Estates-General, ratified the Treaty of Troyes later in the year following the triumphal entry of Henry V into Paris, and its terms were reaffirmed in the city of Amiens in 1423. Meanwhile, the dauphin did not intend to simply accept the terms of the treaty and declared himself regent for Charles VI in direct opposition to Henry V. When word of the dauphin's declaration reached Paris, the response was swift and harsh.

In late 1420, he was charged with treason and with hurling an insult against the regency and the crown. When a French court summoned him to answer the charges, he declined to appear and was immediately stripped of any remaining inheritance, land holdings, and noble titles. He was further banished from the kingdom of France.

Meanwhile, Henry's military campaign in France continued, and the terms of the Treaty of Troyes resonated with his rationale. "In consideration of the frightful and astounding crimes and misdeeds committed against the kingdom of France by Charles, the said dauphin, it is agreed that we, our son Henry, and also our very dear son Philip, duke of Burgundy, will never treat for peace or amity with the said Charles."

The best laid plans of Henry V and Charles VI took a remarkable twist when both monarchs died in 1422. Charles was 53 and actually outlived Henry by two months. His legacy remains shrouded in the turmoil of the Hundred Years' War, and despite the hopes for lasting peace that had been vested in the Treaty of Troyes, many observers saw it as a blatant blow to the long-term interests of France and prima facie evidence of treason. Most of the French people refused to embrace an English king. Henry V, at 36, died suddenly on 31 August, most likely of dysentery contracted during the Siege of Meaux.

> *"MANY OBSERVERS SAW THE TREATY AS A BLATANT BLOW TO THE LONG-TERM INTERESTS OF FRANCE AND PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE OF TREASON"*

Henry V and Catherine of Valois had been married on 2 June 1420, and in December 1421 their only child, a son named Henry, was born at Windsor Castle. Some time before his death, Henry V named his brother John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford, as regent in the name of the infant future King Henry VI. However, following the death of Henry V, the displaced dauphin still asserted his birthright to the French throne and, with Paris occupied by the English and Burgundians, established his court at Bourges.

Although the outlook had initially looked bleak for Charles, the military situation eventually turned against the English as Joan of Arc led French forces to victory, lifting the Siege of Orléans in May 1429 before then escorting the dauphin to Reims, where he was crowned King Charles VII on 17 July.

The Hundred Years' War continued for another 24 years, ending in triumph for Charles VII and relegating the Treaty of Troyes to the status of a mere historical footnote.

STATE OF PLAY: 1435

As 1435 drew to a close, power lay in the hands of John, Duke of Bedford, and his Burgundian allies. But as Bedford was on his deathbed, his alliance looked likely to die with him

Burgundy proved to be a fruitful alliance for England. With Burgundian support in the Hundred Years' War, the two conquered much of Northern France, and Paris fell under Burgundian control. However, with the Treaty of Arras in 1435, Philip the Good looked to reconcile with the French king.

Vastly depleted in 1435, the lands loyal to the French crown were few and far between. Under the Treaty of Arras, King Charles VII condemned the murder of Philip's father, John the Fearless, and agreed to punish the perpetrators. Charles also promised several domains to the duchy of Burgundy.

In return, Philip the Good swore to recognise Charles VII as his king – and while Philip was exempt from paying fealty to Charles, it would resume with Philip's successor. He also returned the county of Tonnerre.

- Anglo-Burgunian territory
- Burgundy territory
- French crown territory

Over the decades following the start of the war, English territory expanded on the western coast of France, with Gascony falling to the English.

THE ENGLISH OCCUPATION OF PARIS

From 1420-36, the capital of France was occupied by the English, with a potent combination of forceful conquest and extensive collaboration

Fifteenth-century Paris was already one of the largest and greatest cities in the known world. It was probably the most significant financial centre in western Europe, and although the administration of France was largely based in Lyon, Paris was the undisputed capital. Its status as a great centre of learning and religion was well established, with the University of Paris and the magnificent cathedral of Notre-Dame.

Paris was also formidably fortified, with 30-foot-high walls built by Charles V in the late-14th century, which protected a population of possibly 100,000 people. However, English forces were able to successfully occupy the capital between 1420-36, and their presence in the French city was largely aided by the city's surprisingly accommodating citizens.

The roots of the English occupation lay in the bitterly divided politics of France. Charles VI suffered from severe mental illnesses, and this led to a power vacuum between the two competing factions of 'Armagnacs' (ostensibly led by the Duke of Orléans) and 'Burgundians', who were led by John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy. Paris had been under Burgundian control since 1418, when there had been a bloody uprising in the city. When the Armagnacs assassinated John the Fearless in 1419, the Burgundians openly aligned themselves with Henry V of England. By 1419, Henry was in the closing stages of conquering Normandy and the new alliance with Burgundy meant that the French crown was his for the taking.

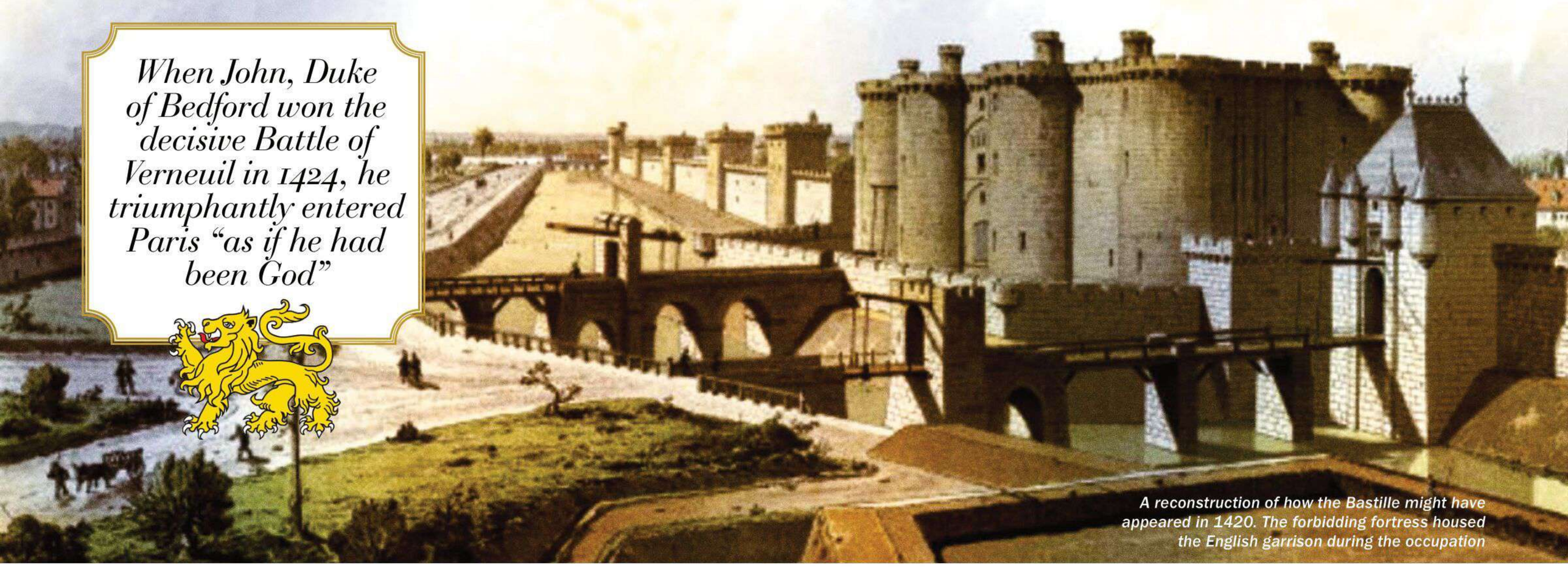
By the terms of the Treaty of Troyes in May 1420, Charles VI's heir (the future Charles VII) was disinherited and it was agreed that Henry V would become king of France upon the death of Charles. It was through this treaty that Henry triumphantly entered Paris on 1 December as 'Regent of France' with Charles at his side. Despite mass starvation in the city, the Parisians welcomed Henry in their thousands and wore red to represent the colour of St George.

Despite being an occupying power, Henry was shrewd enough to realise that support for English rule depended on cooperation, and he accordingly appointed pro-Burgundian Parisians



Joan of Arc at the Siege of Paris, September 1429. Her failed attack on the city shattered her reputation as an invincible warrior

When John, Duke of Bedford won the decisive Battle of Verneuil in 1424, he triumphantly entered Paris "as if he had been God"



A reconstruction of how the Bastille might have appeared in 1420. The forbidding fortress housed the English garrison during the occupation

to hold key positions, including the captain of the English garrison.

Ironically, Henry never became king of France as he died of dysentery on 31 August 1422 at the Château de Vincennes just outside Paris, only six weeks before Charles VI. Nevertheless, his younger brother John, Duke of Bedford moved to secure the English position and he formally became regent of France on behalf of his infant nephew Henry VI on 19 November 1422 in Paris.

The city was now the capital of English France, which encompassed almost half of the kingdom down to the River Loire, although it was greatly facilitated by pro-Burgundian acquiescence. The support of the Burgundian faction ensured a prolonged English occupation out of all proportion to their actual physical presence in Paris.

Within the city walls, all officials (including the head of police and president of the parliament) were French and the actual English population of occupied Paris never exceeded 300 people. Most of those were soldiers of the small garrison that occupied the Bastille fortress, but even there the troops only numbered eight men-at-arms and 17 archers when Henry V died. One chronicler said that most English soldiers within Paris were to be found in taverns or brothels.

However, the English did directly control lands not far from Paris, and fortresses surrounded the city with English garrisons, including Vincennes. The garrison at Pontoise numbered 240 men and reinforcements could descend on Paris at very short notice. Even the Bastille garrison could be threatening, and its archers would sometimes run through the streets indiscriminately firing their bows. Consequently, although their numbers were small, the English were still resented. To all Frenchmen, regardless of politics, the English occupation was a constant reminder of foreign invaders who had taken advantage of an internal civil war and were attempting to dominate them.

Nevertheless, the enmity towards the Armagnacs remained strong, and this was proven during the Siege of Paris in 1429. An Armagnac army led by Joan of Arc and the newly crowned Charles VII descended on the city on 3 September, and it was assumed that the city would open its gates. Until now, Joan had been undefeated in the field, but when she demanded that the gates be opened on pain of death, she was shot in the leg by an irate Parisian crossbowman. The city's artillery then wreaked havoc on the besieging army and the attack was called off on 8 September. The siege broke the illusion of Joan's invincibility, but what is remarkable is that the majority of the hostile garrison were local Parisians and not Englishmen.

Paris would subsequently witness the coronation of Henry VI at Notre-Dame Cathedral and remain ostensibly 'English' until Bedford's death in 1435. By then, the Armagnacs under Charles VII's leadership were in the ascendency and by the terms of the Treaty of Arras, Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy was reconciled with the French king. The Burgundian alliance with England was now worthless and on 17 April 1436, an Armagnac army entered Paris. The English garrison became trapped in the Bastille and the commander, Baron Willoughby de Eresby, was forced to surrender. The garrison left Paris after paying a heavy ransom while the citizens jeered at them and church bells rang in celebration. It was a memorable end to a prolonged but politically complex occupation.

The French coronation of Henry VI

For the only time in history, an English king was officially crowned king of France at Notre-Dame Cathedral

The most famous event of the English occupation of Paris was the crowning of Henry VI as king of France in December 1431. Henry was only nine years old when he sailed from England to France, and he solemnly rode into Paris on a white horse accompanied by senior English nobles including his uncle and regent of France, John, Duke of Bedford.

The Parisians put on a lavish spectacle for the King but the English did not appease the French in organising a genuinely balanced coronation that emphasised the legally equal union of the crowns of France and England.

Henry was crowned in Notre-Dame by the Bishop of Winchester instead of the Bishop of Paris, and English traditions dominated. The French only praised the singing and they heavily criticised the coronation feast. The food was said to be poor and had been cooked three days beforehand by the English. In a familiar example of French antipathy towards English cuisine, it was recorded that the catering preparation "seemed very odd to the French".

Henry VI only remained in Paris for another week, and within two months he sailed back to England, never to return.



The coronation of Henry VI in Paris was the culmination of decades of English military conquests, but the ceremony itself was an underwhelming affair

DEFINING BATTLE

BATTLE OF BAUGÉ

The English aura of invincibility was finally lost as a reckless advance saw their forces obliterated by a French and Scottish coalition

Nearly six years had passed since Agincourt and Henry V was still the master of northern France. The dauphin, the future Charles VII, desperately appealed to the Scots for help, and soldiers arrived shortly after, ready for battle against the English. By March 1421, Henry was back in England, so the heir to the throne, Thomas of Clarence, led the army in his stead. Utilising chevauchée raiding tactics, Clarence swept inland, plundering his way through the countryside. Meeting little to no resistance, it wasn't until the end of the month that the French would finally muster a force to fight back.

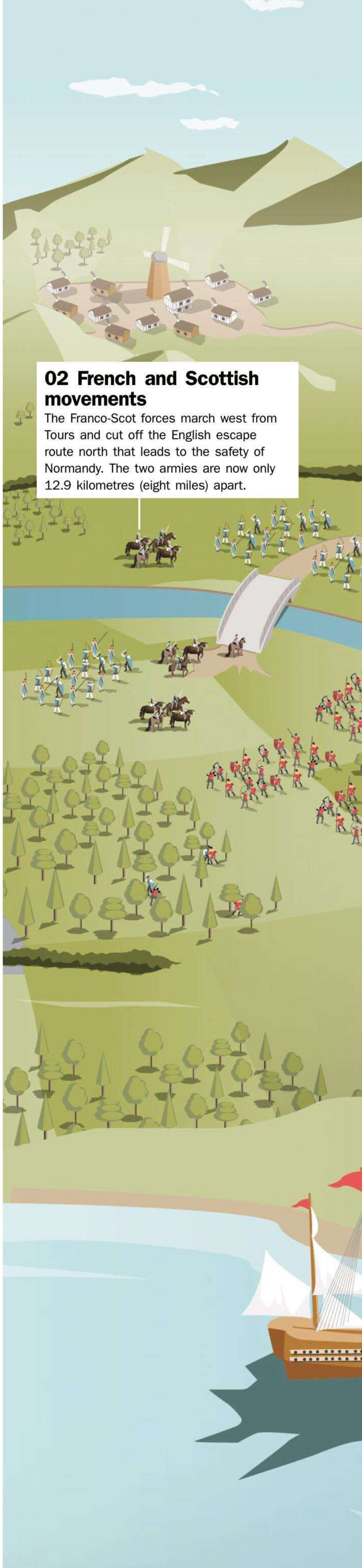
The Scottish role in the Hundred Years' War

England wasn't the only power from across the Channel fighting in France. Scotland wanted a piece of the action as well

The Battle of Baugé was the zenith of Scottish support in France in the Hundred Years' War. The Scots had been at war on and off with the English for decades and had actively assisted the French since 1382, when they were asked to join with Charles VI in return for equipment and supplies. The French had supported Scotland during Edward I's invasion of the country, so both had a history of common interest. The agreement was known as the 'Auld Alliance' and was a constant thorn in the side of the English.

The Truce of Leulinghem was signed with the English in 1389, but it wasn't long until the Scots were back in the fold. After Baugé, the Scots were involved in the losses at the battles of Cravant and Herrings and their role in the war was effectively at an end after a major defeat at the battle of Verneuil. Taking place 80 kilometres (50 miles) west of Paris, the Franco-Scots' charge was decimated by the English longbowmen.





BAUGÉ

10 Momentum with the French

Clarence's body is recovered and shipped back to England, where an angered Henry V prepares to return to France with a new army. After the battle, and with the confidence of their victory, the French begin planning a conquest of Normandy.

07 The final charge

The Scottish and French forces are now back in line, but once again ignoring the advice of his commanders, Clarence presses on. A charge up the hill to the waiting Franco-Scots is ordered despite Salisbury and the archers still not arriving.

06 Clarence presses on

A lull in the fighting gives Clarence the opportunity to wait for reinforcements. Foolishly, he declines and advances towards the village of Baugé. Hidden over the ridge lies the main force of Franco-Scots, who vastly outnumber the English.

08 Melee and English defeat

After a desperate assault, the English are routed by the larger French and Scottish army as Clarence and all of his commanders are killed. Without the support of the longbowmen, the English lose more than a thousand men, while the French and Scottish casualties only number in the hundreds.

09 Salisbury's late arrival

The French and Scottish leave the battlefield, along with the mountain of English bodies behind to rot. Salisbury arrives the next day with reinforcements but he is too late to even glimpse the opposing army, and to his horror, finds only the dead.

05 Attack on the church

Bursting out from the river bank, the English men-at-arms assault the church. The river crossing leaves the English troops scattered and disorganised and very few troops are now under effective command, as many are still on the road behind.

04 Crossing the river

The French and Scottish forces congregate on the other side of the river Couesnon. The only bridge is heavily garrisoned, so the English knights dismount and wade across the river in full armour. Outflanked, the French and Scots retreat into a

03 Clarence's hurried march

Eager to engage the French, Clarence and 1,500 men-at-arms dash towards the French camp after sightings are confirmed by the English forward foraging parties. As second in command, the Earl of Salisbury Thomas Montgau is told to assemble archers and then follow his superior into battle.

01 Failed reconnaissance

SThe English army marches inland from the coast, conquering Maine and settling in the castle of Beaufort. French scouts track the English advance but are captured and interrogated. Now Clarence knows for sure that a rival army is close by.

BEDFORD, THE LOYAL LEADER

Henry V's younger brother continued the English conquest of France with stunning success, winning a huge battle in 1424. However, his greatest threat would come from a teenage peasant girl: Joan of Arc

In the early 15th century, an outnumbered English army lined up against a superior enemy force in northern France. Some 9,600 men stood ready to fight and die for King Henry of England, during the crown's ongoing struggle for control of France. With the help of longbows, the English won a resounding victory, against all the odds. However, at this point comparisons with the Battle of Agincourt end. The king in question was not Henry V, but his two-year-old son Henry VI and the year was not 1415, but 1424. The battlefield was near a town called Verneuil, Normandy, and the English commander was Henry V's younger brother John, Duke of Bedford. His victory at Verneuil was soon dubbed by contemporaries as 'The Second Agincourt'. Bedford is an overlooked figure today, but he was a talented general who successfully continued the English conquest of France during the latter part of the Hundred Years' War after the death of his brother in 1422. That he should be forgotten today is something of a mystery as his military victories were some of the most important of the entire conflict, and his life was heavily influenced by two of the most famous people of the period: Henry V and his arch-enemy Joan of Arc. As the king's brother, Bedford had been assigned the task of administering England in 1415, while Henry V pursued his campaign in France, culminating in the victory at Agincourt. The king's spectacular success had been preceded by the capture of the strategic port of Harfleur on the coast of Normandy, but the adventure had been costly in casualties. Henry's overriding ambition was to complete the conquest of France that had been started by his great-grandfather Edward III. However, before 1415 the only English base on the northern French coast was Calais. Holding on to Harfleur was vital if Henry were to have an extra springboard for a second campaign to subdue Normandy and dictate terms.

His tremendous victory at Verneuil was soon dubbed by contemporaries as 'The Second Agincourt'

The French knew this and started a naval blockade of Harfleur in April 1416, with the assistance of Genoese ships. The English had lost the initiative for the first time since Agincourt and a relief fleet was not able to sail until August. Henry couldn't take command, as he was negotiating an alliance with the visiting Holy Roman emperor, Sigismund I, and instead sent Bedford to relieve Harfleur. Bedford was not an obvious choice for command, as he had little military experience, and he would be facing perhaps 150 French and Genoese carracks. Genoese ships in particular had a fearsome reputation, but despite this, Bedford sailed to meet them with a fleet of about one hundred ships and on 15 August engaged in a fierce fight at the mouth of the River Seine.

Medieval naval battles were capable of replicating land warfare. The opposing ships would use grappling hooks to join together and form a vast, floating, wooden battlefield. The English had used their superiority with longbows to successfully fight at sea before and repeated this tactic in 1416. An anonymous English chronicler wrote: "Following an exchange of missiles… the fury of the combatants had reached boiling point. At last, after a long, drawn-out and most bitter fight of five or six hours, victory was yielded to the English." The Battle of the Seine was hard-fought because neither side could afford defeat. The French, whose pride had been dented at the Battle of Agincourt, were determined not to lose control of the English Channel and the English did not want to forfeit their foothold in Normandy.

The English victory was resounding and strategically important. Although Agincourt had been a great tactical victory, it did not lead to immediate success in the war and Bedford's victory cannot be overlooked. If Harfleur had been recaptured, Henry would have had to restart his conquests from scratch, altering the course of history. The relief of Harfleur enabled Henry to conquer Normandy in 1417, which in turn led to the Treaty of Troyes in 1420. This acknowledged Henry as the heir to the French throne and laid the foundations for a dual monarchy, but none of this would have been possible without Bedford's victory. His conduct during the fight was praised by contemporaries who said, "No one had borne himself more bravely in that battle." Emperor Sigismund was moved to say to Henry, "Happy are those subjects that have such a king, but more is the king that has such subjects."

In 1422 Charles VI of France died and Henry V should have succeeded to the throne as king of both England and France. However, in one of history's most fateful ironies, the warrior king died of dysentery a few months before Charles, leaving his son Henry VI to inherit the dual kingdom.

Unfortunately the new king was only nine-months old and the English administration divided his lands into two governments. Henry V's youngest brother, Humphrey, ran England, while Bedford was named as Regent of France. This was

by far the hardest assignment, as Bedford had to continue his brother's conquests in the face of stiff opposition by those who regarded Charles VI's son, the Dauphin, as the true king of France.

One Victorian historian said Bedford was, "at once prime minister and commander-in-chief, he was virtually king of France." Additionally, Bedford had to maintain a tenuous alliance with the Duke of Burgundy. Burgundian support was essential to Bedford as the English did not have a numerical superiority in France, but the alliance was shaky as Burgundy was a semi-dependent duchy and its duke was a slippery character who changed sides depending on the political climate. This meant that the English took on the bulk of the military offensive against 'Dauphinist' French armies.

Under Bedford's leadership the English armies had continued success in France. An Anglo-Burgundian army defeated a numerically superior Franco-Scottish army at Cravant in July 1423 and Bedford then intended to build up his army for a decisive stroke against the Dauphin.

His plan relied on strengthening Normandy's frontiers by occupying Picardy and driving French troops from key towns on the River Somme. To achieve this, Bedford laid siege to Ivry, a town 30 miles west of Paris, but the French immediately captured the Norman border town of Verneuil in August 1424. Ivry surrendered on 14 August and Bedford rushed to recapture Verneuil. The battle outside its walls secured Bedford's reputation.

On 17 August, Bedford's army of approximately 9,600 men lined up across the north road. He arranged his army in the 'Agincourt' formation with his men-at-arms in the centre and the famous archers on the flanks. There was also a reserve of 2,000 archers who formed a laager of wagons and horses to defend the baggage train.

Facing the English was a 'French' army of about 14-16,000 men but 6,000 of these troops were Scottish under the command of the Earls of Douglas and Buchan. The Scots were vigorous allies of the French and had been a considerable thorn in the side of the English for decades, and the Dauphin had even appointed Buchan as Constable of France. Viscount d'Aumale was commanding this coalition army, but the Scots had a great degree of influence. For Bedford, the battle would be personal, as it was a Scottish force that had killed his elder brother, Thomas, Duke of Clarence, at the Battle of Baugé in 1421.

A Burgundian eyewitness, Jean de Waurin, who fought for the English, described the Anglo-Scottish enmity during the battle: "The English archers, and the Scots who were with the French, began to shoot each other so cruelly that it was horrible to look at them. They brought death with full force to those they attacked. After the shooting the parties attacked each other furiously, hand to hand." Waurin, who had fought at Agincourt, stated that Verneuil was a more ferocious battle: "Without doubt, I have never seen a finer company where there were so many nobles showing greater appearance of wanting to fight. I saw the assembly of Agincourt, but the assembly at Verneuil was the most formidable and the best fought." He went on to state: "This battle lasted about three-quarters of an hour, very terrible and bloody, and it was not in the memory of man to have two such mighty parties fighting for such a space of time without being able to tell to whom the loss or victory would turn…"

Eventually, however, victory turned decisively for the English. As at Agincourt, the archers played a part in the success but the fighting was much more hand-to-hand and the casualties were high. The English lost 1,600 men while the Franco-Scottish army had casualties of at least 7,000. The vast majority of these were the Scots who were virtually annihilated.

Two days after the battle, Bedford confirmed: "There were very few Scots who were not slain." Contemporaries are unanimous about Bedford's leadership capabilities, with Waurin saying, "The Duke of Bedford did that day wonderful deeds of arms, and killed many a man with an axe that he held in two hands. He reached no one whom he did not fell, he was great in body and large in limbs, wise and brave in arms." Unlike Agincourt, Verneuil's strategic importance was profound. The battle destroyed the Scottish army and French morale, allowing the English to push further south towards the Loire River and securing Normandy from the French for nearly 30 years. For five years after Verneuil, the English were virtually unopposed by the French until they laid siege to the town of Orléans between 1428-29 when Bedford would first hear from his most famous foe: Joan of Arc.



Joan of Arc's military successes enabled the coronation of Charles VII in Reims Cathedral in direct defiance of Bedford's English regime

To the victor, the spoils

Despite Joan of Arc, Henry VI was crowned King of France

It is commonly assumed that Joan of Arc's military successes caused the collapse of English rule in France. While this was true in the long term, it was not apparent in the early 1430s. In fact Henry VI of England was crowned in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris as King of France on 26 December 1431, months after Joan had been executed. He was only ten years old, but he had already been crowned as King of England on 6 November 1429 in Westminster Abbey. The ceremony was rich in symbolism for his dual kingdoms.

He was announced as, "Born by descent and title of right justly to reign in England and in France." The traditional site for crowning French kings was at Reims Cathedral but it was under hostile French occupation so Paris was the second option.

Henry arrived in Paris on a white horse accompanied by his retinue and nobles, with Bedford prominent among them. He rode under a canopy, the symbol of rank and honour, and was greeted by the prominent Parisian bishops and burghers who all wore lavish costumes. Paris was decked out with colourful symbolic shields and statues to mark Henry's arrival.

During the coronation ceremony the king was crowned by the Bishop of Winchester and the singing was apparently of a good standard. The same could not be said of the celebratory banquet, as the food organised by the English had been prepared three days before and was cold. In time-honoured tradition the French disapproved, with one Parisian writing, "This seemed very odd to the French."



Henry VI was crowned in Notre Dame Cathedral as king of France in December 1431. This was arguably the pinnacle of Bedford's achievements

The Battle of Verneuil

In August 1424, northern France was secured for the English in a clash that came to be known as the 'Second Agincourt'

Bedford had won a great naval battle in 1416 but he was still untested on a traditional field of battle. By 1424, the war in France had reached a critical level. With Henry V dead and a toddler on two thrones it was up to Bedford to advance the English cause in France but he was up against formidable and unyielding opponents. French supporters of the Dauphin always outnumbered English troops and they were assisted by a Scottish army that was intent on fighting the Regent to the death. Bedford was about to face his greatest challenge.



Above: The Battle of Verneuil in 1424 was one of the most decisive clashes of the Hundred Years' War and was known as 'The Second Agincourt'

01 Bedford approaches

At the crack of dawn on 17 August, Bedford draws up his army of 9,600 men on the road from Damville in the northeast of Normandy where it emerges from a forest onto a plain in front of the town of Verneuil.

02 The English prepare

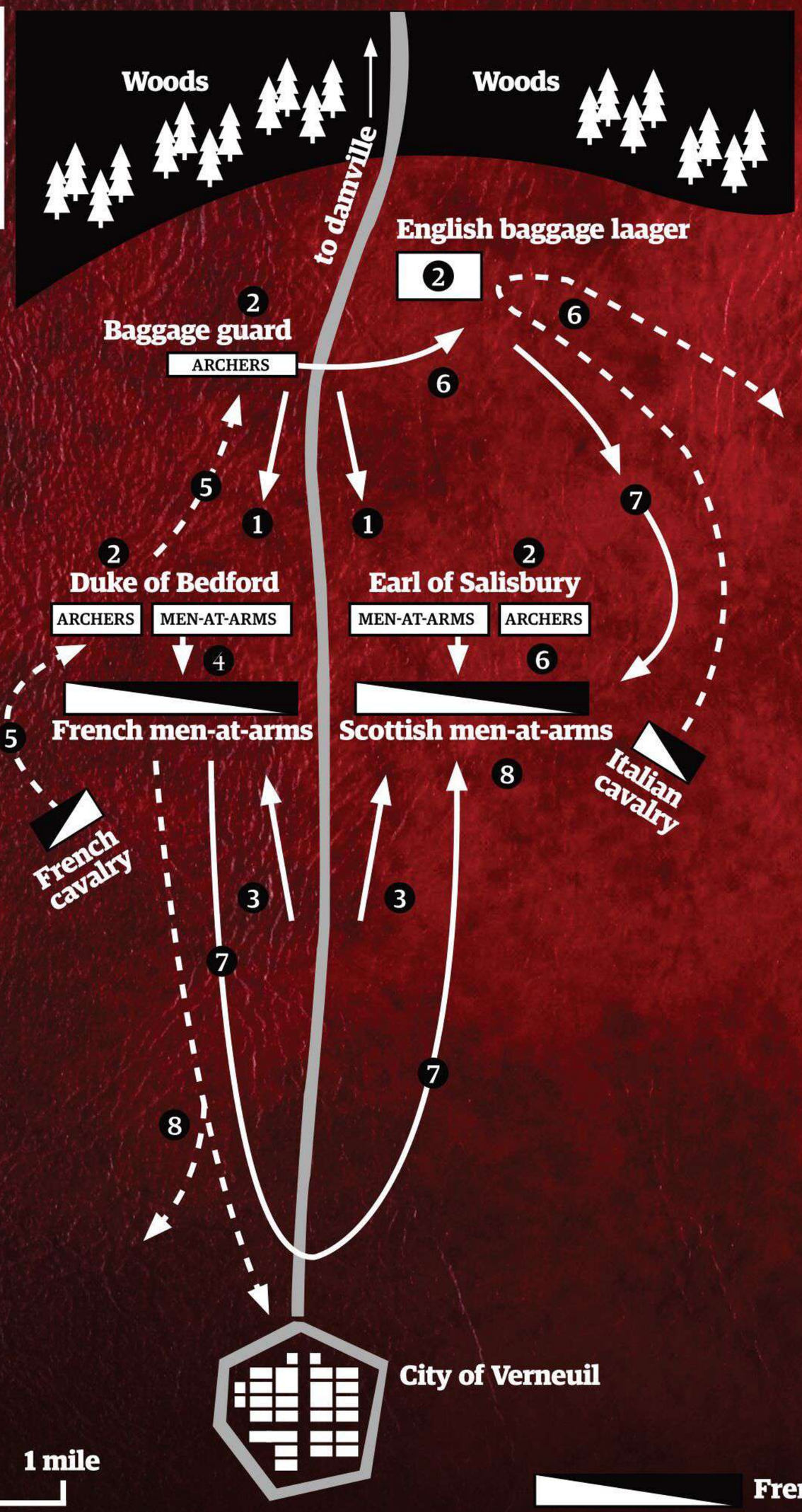
Bedford places his dismounted men-at-arms in the centre of the battle, while he positions his archers on the wings. Bedford commands the right division, while the Earl of Salisbury commands the left. There are two reserves, 2,000 mounted archers and a separate square, laagered baggage train where horses are tethered amongst the wagons.

03 The French and Scots prepare

The Franco-Scottish army of 14-16,000 men form in two divisions of men-at-arms linked by archers while cavalry protects their wings. Viscount d'Aumale commands the left while the Earls of Buchan and Douglas command 6,000 Scots on the right.

04 Threats, deceit and an advance

The Scottish tell the English soldiers that they intend to give no quarter, but neither side makes to attack for hours in the sweltering sun. At approximately 4pm Bedford orders an advance. The English troops shout, "St George! Bedford!" and slowly march forward with the fleet of archers hammering defensive stakes into the dusty ground.



05 Cavalry charge and vicious combat

French cavalrymen charge through archers on Bedford's right flank, riding on before being stopped by the bowmen in reserve. Many of the Englishmen flee, but the rest of Bedford's division smash into d'Aumale's division in furious hand-to-hand combat. Bedford is positioned in the thick of the fighting.

06 Italians loot the English laager

On the English left Salisbury is engaged in fierce fighting with the Scots. Meanwhile, 600 Italian cavalry sweep past him to plunder the laager where they start to loot the baggage. The English reserve repels the French cavalrymen before rushing to beat off the Italians in the laager.

07 English reassemble and charge

The energised English reserve now charges to help Salisbury, careering into the Scottish flank with a loud yell. Meanwhile Bedford, who has managed to beat off the French left, reassembles his own division to charge at the Scottish rear, overwhelming them in the process.

08 A vengeful slaughter

ScThe Scots are killed almost to a man, including the Earls of Buchan, Douglas and Mar. The French flee the field with the dead including the viscounts of Aumale and Narbonne. Marshal Lafayette and Jean II, Duke of Alençon are among the captured and the English are triumphant.



Joan of Arc's determination and dedication to her beliefs have made her a famous figure in history

BEHIND THE LEGEND JOAN OF ARC

The humble peasant girl who helped defeat the English is remembered as a saint and a liberator, but she was also a pawn in a powerful political game

On 12 February 1429, at the height of the Hundred Years' War, a convoy carrying supplies to the English army besieging the city of Orléans is attacked. As a 4,000-strong force loyal to France's heir apparent, the Dauphin, gathers about them, the English draw their wagons into a defensive formation and fire wave after wave of arrows into the advancing French.

By the time the fighting is done more than 400 Frenchmen and their Scottish allies are dead. The English have lost just four fighters. The massacre is to prove the lowest point in the Dauphin's struggle to claim the French throne. Just three weeks later, though, a small band of armed men, dusty from the road, arrive at the Dauphin's great castle at Chinon, 160 kilometres to the south. Among them is a 17-year-old peasant girl with short hair, who is dressed as a man. The girl says she has a message for the Dauphin and when she is granted an audience with the would-be king, she declares to his court that she has come to save France by seeing him crowned king, and that she was sent by God to do so. Her name, she says, is Joan of Arc.

To understand the remarkable story of one of history's most iconic figures, it's first necessary to grasp just how different to our modern day the world was that she lived in. Medieval Europe's landscape was dominated by castles, cathedrals and walled cities. A lack of understanding of the natural world ensured witches, demons and angels were considered real, while religious thinkers dominated philosophically and ideologically.

It was also a world where misogyny was rife, with women facing restrictions on what property they could own, and what the law and custom would permit them to do with their lives. Even wearing men's clothing as a woman was deemed an abomination to God. And yet it was in men's clothes that Joan stood when she addressed the Dauphin on 6 March 1429. She had adopted the attire a few weeks earlier when she begun her journey to Chinon from the town of Vaucouleurs. The captain of the garrison there had given them to her – as well as a horse and an armed escort – as a way of disguising

her identity, because Joan's fame as a potential prophet was already starting to spread among the people of France.

Joan had been born in the village of Domrémy, 250 kilometres north east of Paris, in 1412. France, by then, was a land that had been ripped apart by war for generations. Since 1337, England and France had been struggling for control of the country through the Hundred Years' War, and in 1415, when Joan was just three years old, the French had suffered a crushing defeat against the English under Henry V at Agincourt.

Despite heavily outnumbering the English that day, the French army was defeated when its aristocratic knights – bogged down on a rain-sodden battlefield – were famously annihilated by Henry's archers. Not that it was explained in those terms at the time, of course. This was Medieval Europe, where the will of God was intrinsically linked to daily life, and while the English king claimed divine intervention had helped him to such an improbable victory, the French put their defeat down to the notion that they were being punished by God. France wasn't a country just at war with England, but one that was at war with itself. Its king, Charles VI, having descended into madness, was incapable of ruling. This had created a power vacuum that spawned two factions – the Burgundians and the loyalist Armagnacs – to wrestle for control of the country.

So bitter was the rivalry that five years after Agincourt, the Burgundians' leader, the Duke of Burgundy, even sided with the occupying English, signing a pact with them against the Armagnacs, now led by Charles VI's son and heir apparent, the Dauphin. And so the civil war raged on. For eight years, endless defeats followed for the Armagnacs until the Dauphin's army had been forced back to the River Loire, which runs almost the entire width of France. The country was now essentially cut in two with the English and the Burgundians controlling the north – including Paris – and the Armagnacs controlling the south.

By the time she was 13, Joan's village in north east France was on the front line and Domrémy became an Armagnac outpost surrounded by Burgundian and English territory. The village was subjected to raids and attacks and Joan's family briefly became refugees. It's perhaps no surprise, then, that during this deeply unsettling time a potentially traumatised Joan claims to have first heard voices in her head. Modern psychologists have put this down to a possible personality disorder, but because of the Christian beliefs of her time, Joan reasoned that these voices must be messages from God. Such beliefs were not unusual in 15th century Europe. Indeed, during her lifetime there would have been dozens of so-called religious visionaries in France who also claimed to have a direct line to God Almighty. It's what the voices were telling Joan to do, however, that made her stand out. "Go to the Dauphin," they repeated, "he will give you an army to lead, and with it you will drive the English from France's shores!"

Logically, this seemed like an impossible proposition. Joan was young, poor and female, and unsurprisingly initial attempts to speak to the Dauphin were brushed aside. But after the massacre in February 1429, it seems he was desperate enough to try anything, and sent for her. Like all rulers of his day, the Dauphin firmly believed that his authority had been bestowed on him by God, and that he had a duty to search for God's will in the world around him – even if it was to come to him via the ravings of a peasant girl. He may also have sensed there was a potential propaganda coup in the offing.

Joan was questioned for three weeks by the best theologians at the Dauphin's disposal. These



A painting depicting the capture of Joan

"FRANCE WASN'T A COUNTRY JUST AT WAR WITH ENGLAND, BUT ONE THAT WAS AT WAR WITH ITSELF"

The Dauphin more than likely used Joan to suit his own political ends to raise troop morale



men believed that God hadn't made women to be soldiers, let alone lead armies, but she was so utterly convinced of what the voices had apparently told her, that they couldn't decide whether she was indeed a messenger from God, or an envoy of the devil. Hedging their bets, they declared that, to be sure, they needed 'a sign' – by which they meant a get-out-clause. And when they asked Joan how she intended to see the Dauphin crowned in Reims Cathedral, given that besieged Orléans stood in the way, they got what they were after. "Give me an army," Joan confidently told them, "and I'll break the siege myself."

The theologians now told the Dauphin that Joan was convincing, she might even be the real deal, but to be sure she should accompany an army to Orléans. If they managed to break the siege then it would indeed seem she was a divine messenger, a sign that things would start going the Dauphin's way. If they failed, then they'd know that Joan had, in fact, been sent by the devil. So the Dauphin rolled the dice. He ordered a special suit of armour to be made for her tiny frame, along with a white silk banner depicting Christ flanked by angels. This would help make her stand out in battle for all to see. If God really was backing his cause, the Dauphin wanted both his enemies and his supporters to know about it.

Joan reached Orléans on 29 April 1429. The English army there wasn't large enough to effectively surround the city, and Joan managed to slip through their lines into the citadel on the eastern side. Locals greeted her as a saviour. By

Guilty of Heresy

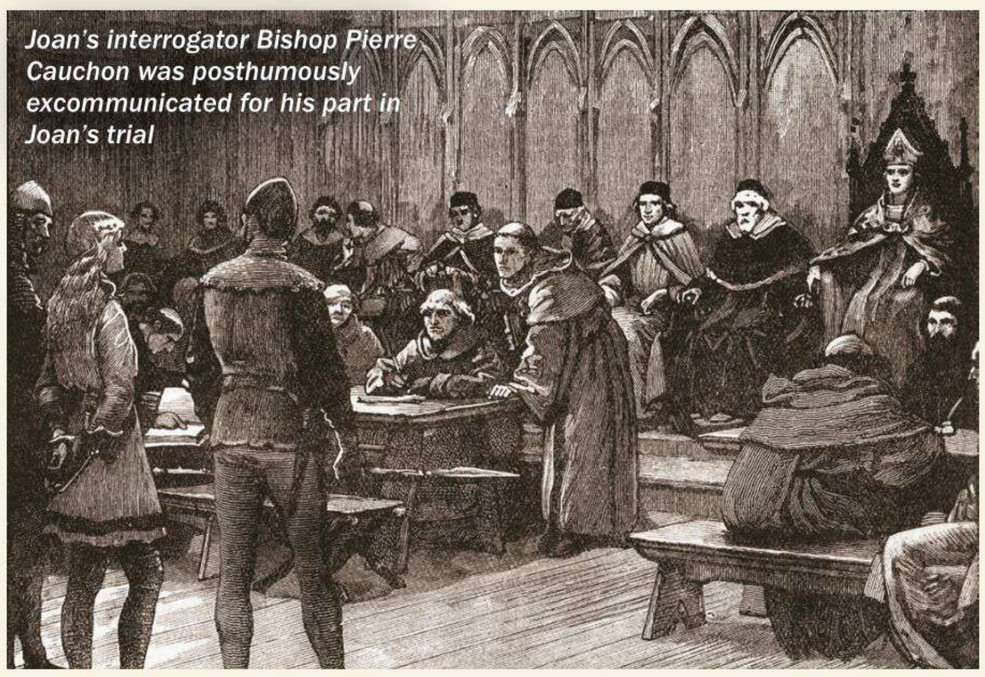
Politically motivated, Joan's trial was deliberately rigged to publicly discredit her and destroy morale

The trial against Joan began in early 1431. She was brought daily from her cell to face the scrutiny of a panel of 43 judges, including her main interrogator, a Burgundian bishop called Pierre Cauchon. On day four, Joan revealed that when she first heard heavenly voices aged 13, she had also been visited by St Michael and a host of angels in a vision.

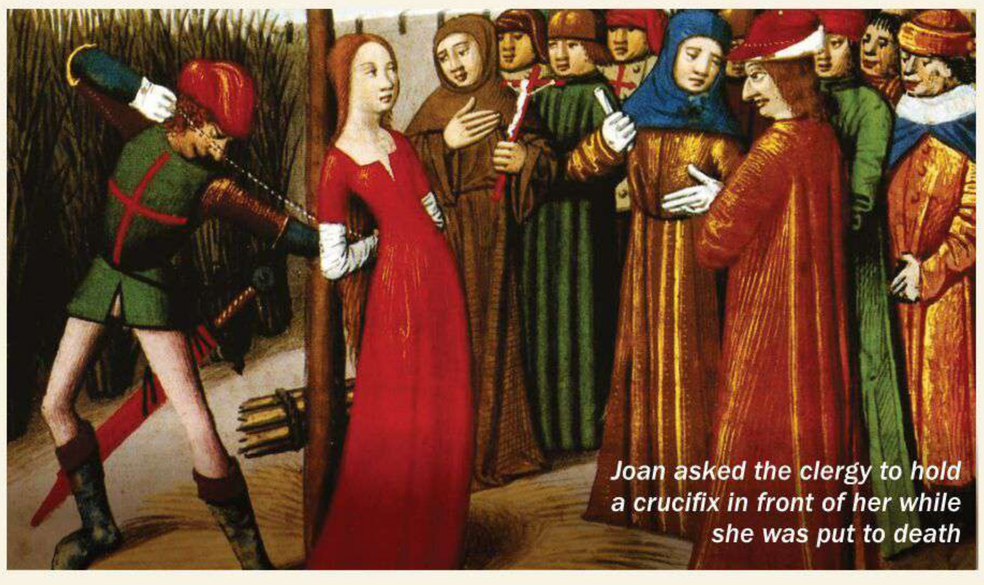
It was exactly the kind of tale that Couchon wanted to hear. The church accepted that angels and demons could be seen by humans, but had concluded that as angels were heavenly they possessed few physical characteristics. It was a theosophical technicality of which the uneducated Joan was unaware. At Couchon's prompting, she went on to reveal her vision in ever-greater detail in an attempt to convince the panel she was telling the truth. Her fate was finally sealed, though, when Joan claimed to have experienced a second vision when she first visited the Dauphin and asked for an army to lead. Again, there were a host of angels, one of whom carried a golden crown – a symbol from God, she said, that France's kingdom must be restored to its rightful heir.

Couchon concluded that as no angel could physically carry anything, the visions had to be the devil's work. Joan was convicted of heresy and told to confess her sins or be burned alive. A terrified Joan made her mark on a confession she couldn't read and her sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

Four days later, however, she withdrew her confession, and revealed to Couchon as she did that the angel who carried the crown was, in fact, herself. "I'd promised my King that if he put me to work," she explained, "that I would see him crowned." It wasn't enough to save her. Joan was burned to death on 30 May 1431. She was thought to be 19 years old.



Joan's interrogator Bishop Pierre Cauchon was posthumously excommunicated for his part in Joan's trial



Joan asked the clergy to hold a crucifix in front of her while she was put to death

Women warriors through history

Female fighters have featured on battlefields since antiquity – they just don't get much press

Artemisia of Caria



The queen of Halicarnassus (modern-day Turkey) in the 5th century BCE commanded five ships at the Battle of Artemisium, fighting as an ally of Persian King Xerxes. Greek historian Herodotus wrote of her heroics, ruthlessness and strategic brilliance.

Queen Boudicca



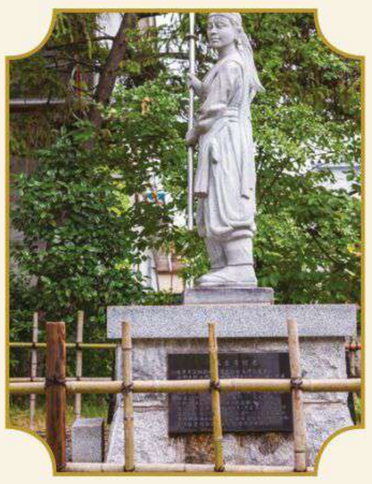
Around 60 CE Boudicca, queen of the Iceni tribe in Britain, led a revolt against the Romans after legionaries had raped her daughters. Leading a huge army, she reportedly slaughtered 80,000 people in vengeance.

Zenobia



The warrior queen of the Palmyrene Empire ruled in Syria from 250-275. She led armies against the Roman Empire under Claudius II and was so successful in battle that she effectively chased Roman legions right out of Asia Minor.

Nakano Takeko



As a female Samurai warrior, Nakano fought gallantly in the Boshin Conflict, a Japanese civil war (1868-9). She was sadly killed in battle as she led an all-female unit against the Imperial Japanese army.

Lydia Litvyak



The World War II Soviet fighter ace was the first woman to shoot down an enemy plane. Lydia also holds the record for most kills by a female pilot (12 solo, four shared).



The Siege of Orléans is remembered as the turning point in the Dauphin's war against the English

"AFTER SEVEN MONTHS OF SIEGE JOAN HAD FREED ORLÉANS IN FOUR DAYS. THIS WAS PROOF, HER SUPPORTERS CLAIMED, THAT GOD HAD SENT HER"

4 May, with the rest of her army having now also reached the city, the battle for Orléans could begin.

Early in the afternoon, Joan rode at the sharp end of an attack against the weak English position to the east. It was soon overwhelmed after fierce fighting. That night Joan, who couldn't write, dictated a letter demanding that the English surrender and warned them of dire consequences if they refused. The letter was attached to an arrow and fired into the English lines. Her warning, however, was not to be heeded and so the killing continued for the next four days.

At that time, Orléans was a walled city that stood on the north side of the Loire River, and was connected to the south side by a bridge, at the end of which was a fortified gatehouse called the Tourelles. During the earliest days of the siege the English had taken it, but had failed to seize the north side of the bridge – hence the stalemate. If the French could retake the Tourelles, however, they would break the English siege. So at dawn on 7 May, Joan rallied the demoralised French troops again and urged them to follow her. The city's gates were once again opened and she galloped forward on horseback, waving her white banner. Inspired by her reckless courage, the army chased after her. Several hours later, the French troops had fought their way around to the Tourelles.

As missiles and arrows rained down from the walls of this fortress, ladders were brought forward and Joan, still leading from the front, began to climb one until an arrow found its way through a weak spot in her armour. The arrow had apparently pierced her shoulder some 15 centimetres, and as she was carried from the battlefield, many believed that she had been mortally wounded. She hadn't, and after having her wounds dressed, Joan – high on religious fervour – was back in the fray. Her inspiring presence ensured that by sundown, the French had won a famous victory.

After seven months of siege Joan had freed Orléans in a matter of four days. This was proof, her supporters now claimed, that God had indeed sent her, and news of her miraculous victory began to spread far and wide. Joan's conviction was now stronger than ever. Orléans had been her test and victory was her sign. Now came her true purpose – to crown the Dauphin and drive the English out of France forever.

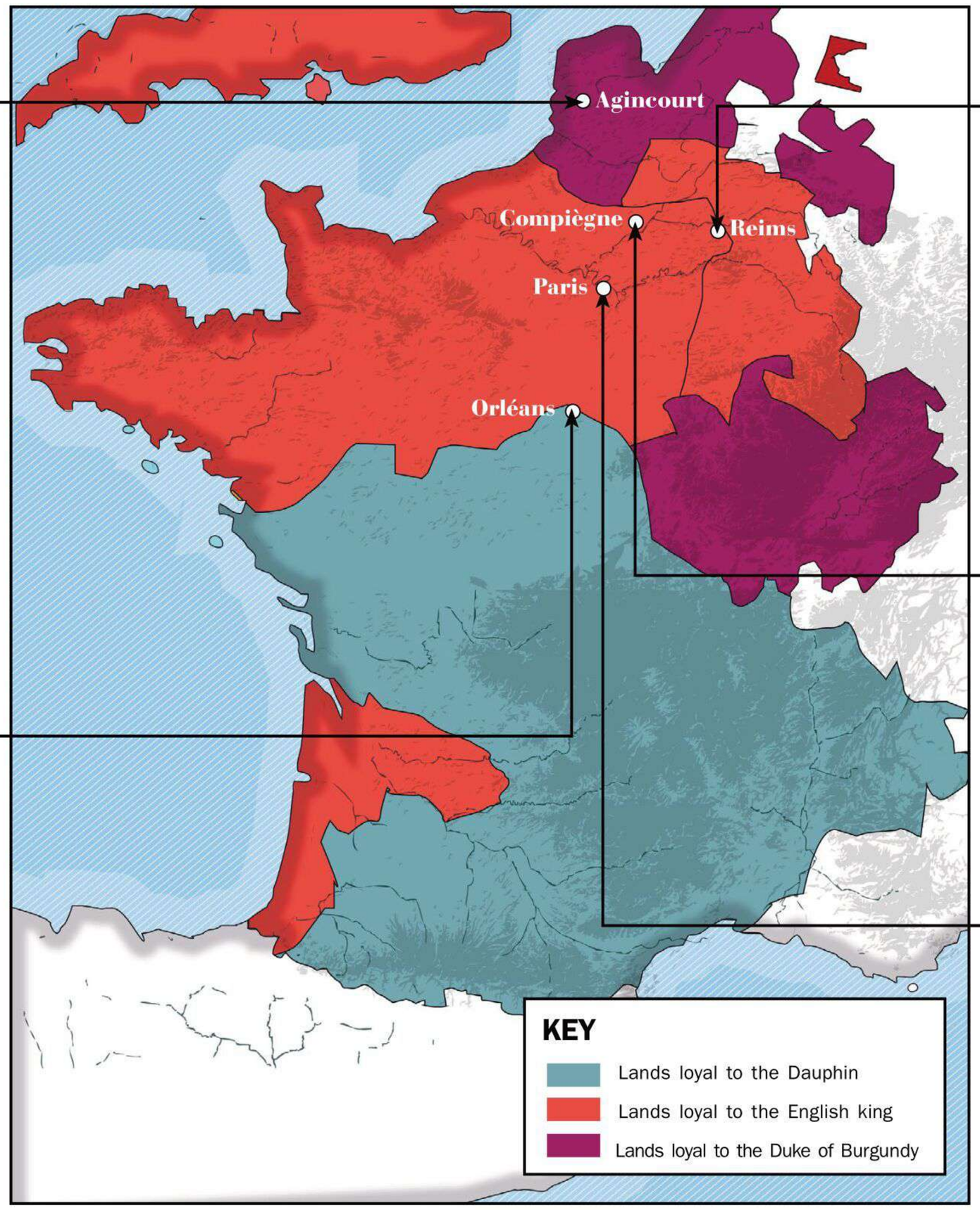
For centuries, French kings had been crowned in Reims Cathedral, which lay over 160 kilometres north of Orléans, deep in English-held territory of France. Gathering around them the biggest army he could muster, the Dauphin now rode north with Joan of Arc at his side. Buoyed by their recent victory and the divine presence of Joan, now being

France during Joan's lifetime

The victories and defeats Joan would have known

Battle of Agincourt 1415

Hugely significant victory for England's Henry V that sets the stage for the rest of the Hundred Year's War – which finally ends in 1453. The humiliating French defeat allows the English to dominate as France tears itself apart.



Capture of Reims 1429

Joan leads the Dauphin's army into the ancient city on 16 July. The following morning the heir apparent to the kingdom of France is crowned king, confirming his legitimacy to the French throne.

Siege of Compiègne

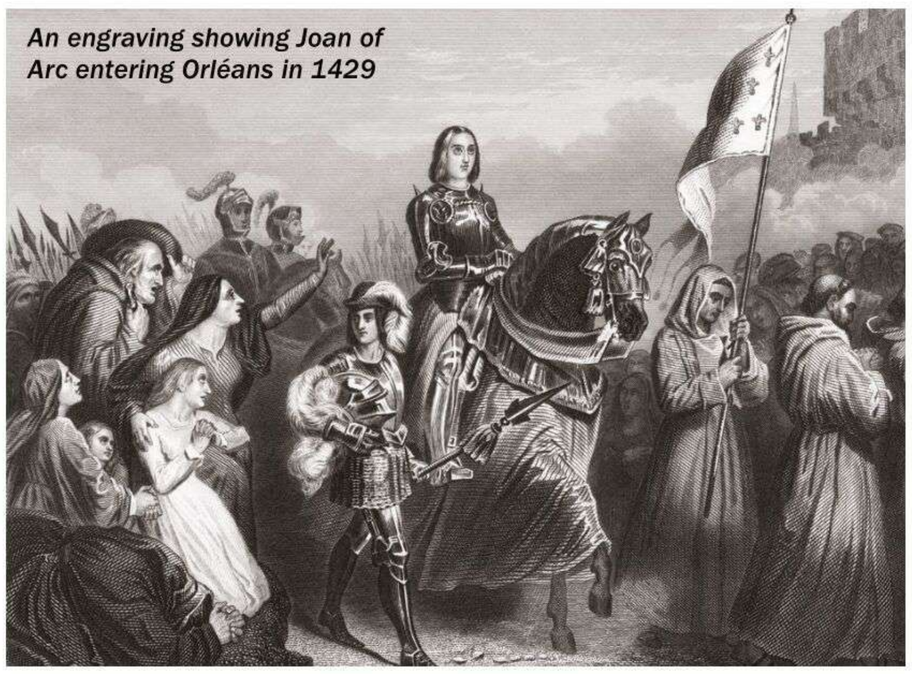
After a six-month truce, hostilities are renewed when the Armagnac town is attacked by the Duke of Normandy. Leading a small force to liberate it, Joan is again defeated in battle and captured. She is subsequently executed for heresy.

Siege of Orléans 1428-9

The turning point of the conflict for the Armagnac's cause. Joan of Arc's presence helps the French defeat the English, and lift the siege. The significance is to have a profound effect on French moral, though not the immediate political situation.

Siege of Paris 1430

Joan's disastrous attempt to seize the capital ends in defeat, with over 1,000 of the new king's soldiers killed and more than 500 wounded for zero gain. It marks the end of Joan's usefulness to the French crown.



An engraving showing Joan of Arc entering Orléans in 1429

This painting by George William Joy shows Joan asleep in prison, guarded by an angel

Joan's Legend

Four alternative takes on who and what the Maid of Orléans was

Joan was the Dauphin's half-sister



In 1819, French writer Pierre Caze claims that Joan was the illegitimate daughter of the Queen Isabeau of Bavaria (Charles VI's wife) and Duke Louis of Orléans. His basis for the accusation? A sword in the coat of arms the Dauphin grants her, which Caze calls the baton of bastardy.
Reality: It's an intriguing theory but highly improbable. Duke Louis died five years before Joan's supposed birth.



Relics of Joan survived

A charred bone fragment is displayed at the Joan of Arc museum in Chinon, which is claimed to have been rescued from Joan's execution pyre. A helmet, said to have been Joan's, can be seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.
Reality: There's no evidence to link the helmet to Joan while forensic analysis of the bone revealed it's from an Egyptian mummy!

Joan survived

Numerous imposters pretended to be Joan after she was executed. The most successful of these was a female adventurer and soldier called Claude des Armoises. She was so convincing that she even fooled Joan's brothers. She continued with the charade for years, accepting lavish gifts from admirers.
Reality: Charles VII dismissed Claudes as an imposter after meeting her in 1440.

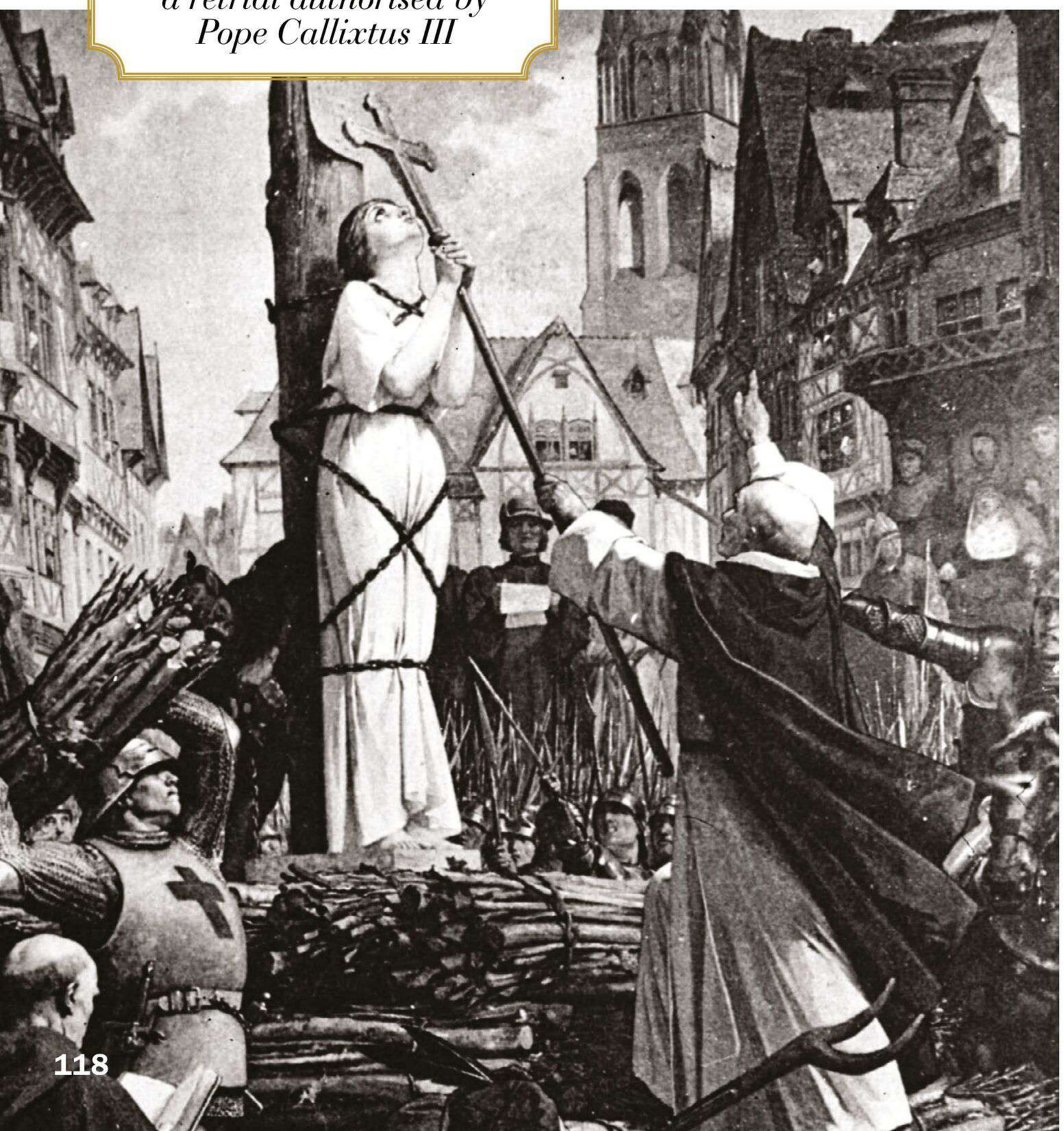




Joan was a witch

As late as 1921, anthropologist Margaret Murray was arguing that the religious authorities had been correct in accusing Joan of witchcraft. She insisted Joan was the leader of a cult that worshipped the pagan huntress Diana, and challenged the Catholic Church's power.
Reality: All evidence suggests Joan's beliefs were fanatically Christian. Joan was elevated to sainthood a year before Murray published her theory.

In 1456, three years after the war ended, Joan was absolved of her crimes in a retrial authorised by Pope Callixtus III



called the Maid of Orléans, the Dauphin's troops swept north, defeating all who opposed them.

Ordinarily a coronation took months of preparation but these were extraordinary days and time was precious. Swearing the Dauphin in as quickly as possible was a matter of urgent political expediency and, after his courtiers stayed up all night to make the necessary arrangements, the Dauphin was crowned the morning after he entered the city. Four months earlier, the Armagnac cause looked to be on the brink of collapse and yet now – thanks in no small part Joan – he had been crowned King Charles VII of France.

Joan's aim now was to unite the country under its new monarch but appeals to the Burgundians were rejected. They had sworn allegiance to the king of England, and so the civil war would continue alongside the struggle to force out the English occupiers. Joan hoped to deal both enemies a fatal blow by capturing the nation's capital. It turned out that the battle for Paris, however, would prove a much greater challenge than the liberation of Orléans had been.

Paris was the most fortified city in Western Europe. High walls with towers and a huge moat encircled it, while English and Burgundian troops defended its ramparts with cannons and archers. Then there were the locals to consider. Unlike the people of Orléans, Paris's 280,000-strong population were largely hostile to the Armagnac cause, and certainly could not be expected to rise up from within.

Joan, however, convinced that she was an agent of the Almighty, refused to see – despite the extraordinary odds stacks against her – that attacking Paris was effectively a suicide mission.



Joan faced up to misogyny and prejudice to lead the French to victory

Joan the Maid

Historian Juliet Barker unravels how Joan was used and abused by the Kingdoms of England and France

"SHE WAS PULLED FROM HER HORSE… AND SOON FOUND HERSELF IN THE POSITION OF BEING THE MOST VALUABLE POLITICAL PRISONER IN FRANCE"

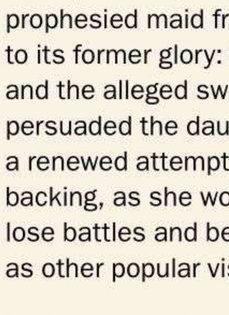
Symbolically, she picked 8 September – the holy feast day of the nativity of the virgin – as the date for the attack.

Joan rode at the front of the assault, hurtling headlong into battle on her charger with her white silk banner fluttering for all to see. Meanwhile, the king's troops swarmed against Paris's walls as arrows, cannonballs and other missiles poured down on top of them from above. After hours of desperate attempts to breach the city's ramparts, Joan was once again wounded when a crossbow bolt ripped through her thigh. She was lucky. The man next to her bearing her standard was killed with an arrow to the face. Joan was carried from the battlefield, and the retreat sounded. Over 1,500 of the king's men had been killed or wounded in the doomed assault. Joan was keen to attack again in the morning, but the king, no doubt fearing that he might lose his entire army, forbade it.

The king decided that diplomacy, not military action, would be the way forward, and by the end of 1429 a six-month truce had been declared. Joan counselled against it, insisting that the armed struggle was God's will – an argument that got some of the king's courtiers whispering in his ear that Joan's determination to fight on was making her a liability. The king, it seemed, tended to agree and the no-longer useful Joan gradually fell out of favour with him.

When hostilities resumed in the spring 1430, the Duke of Burgundy attacked the Armagnac town of Compiègne, north of Paris. Despite the fact she no longer had the clear support of the king, Joan rode to the town with a group of loyal followers intent on chasing off the Burgundians. They arrived on the night of 22 May, and the next morning Joan donned her armour for the last time. Mounting up and with her famous banner flying, she led her small group of fighters into battle, attacking Burgundy's troops camped outside the town's gates. But her force was outnumbered and soon overwhelmed. As the Burgundian troops swarmed all around her, she was pulled from her horse by an archer, and soon found herself in the position of being the most valuable political prisoner in the whole of France.

Joan had once been used by the Armagnacs as a powerful propaganda tool to galvanise its demoralised army. After the debacle at the Battle of Paris, however, her usefulness to the king's cause had become questionable. With her capture by the English, she would now benefit the king's enemies who sought to exploit the 18-year-old peasant girl for their own ends. After all, if they could prove that Joan was a liar, or – even better – a heretic sent by Satan, they could drain the power surrounding the Maid of Orléans, and send the morale of the Armagnac armies plummeting back into the darkness and despair of the previous year.



How common was it for people in the Medieval period to claim they were in communication with God?

Joan of Arc came from a long line of allegedly holy women (they were usually women!) who claimed to have personally experienced divine revelation. The number of lay people making such claims had been on the increase since the middle of the 14th century and they had to be taken seriously because they challenged the church's authority as the sole interpreter of God's word on Earth and stirred up popular unrest.

Joan was one of at least three female visionaries who had recently been brought before the king of France to deliver their divine messages to him; three of her own contemporaries would also be tried for heresy on the same grounds, two of them abjuring and one, like Joan, refusing to do so and being burned at the stake.

What made Joan stand out from the other self-confessed 'prophets', like William the Shepherd, of the time?

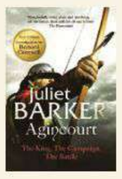
Joan had absolute faith in the divine origins of her mission and was utterly convinced that her voices were real, which made her a convincing, fearless and charismatic leadership figure, especially in a divided country which, until she arrived, had believed that God was on the side of the English. However, she also had powerful patrons at court (including Yolande of Aragon, the dauphin's mother-in-law) who helped to shape her into the image of the prophesied maid from Lorraine who would restore France to its former glory: they provided her with male armour and the alleged sword of Charlemagne's grandfather and persuaded the dauphin to accept her as the figurehead of a renewed attempt to regain his kingdom. Without their backing, as she would soon discover when she started to lose battles and became a liability, she was as ineffective as other popular visionaries and prophets.

What was the reaction to Joan's death?

We don't know how the ordinary soldiers she had led reacted but the dauphin, whom she had crowned Charles VII, never once intervened to save her or mentioned her again until it became imperative to get her condemnation as a heretic overturned 20 years later. Her former supporters among the court party simply found another supposed prophet, William the Shepherd, to replace her. Only in Orléans, the city she had helped to raise from English siege, was she remembered and celebrated with an annual festival in her honour for decades to come.

How responsible was Joan for the reigniting military fortunes of France?

As the prophesied Maid of Lorraine, Joan gave the armies hope. But the fact remains that, for the most part, she did this as a figurehead, rather than as a general. It was the experienced military commanders who actually won the battle of Patay and the Reims campaign; they excluded her from their decision-making and, when she tried to lay siege to Paris without their support, she failed. What is often forgotten is that the English would continue to rule most of northern France for another two decades after her death.



Juliet Barker has written extensivly on the Hundred Years' War and the Medieval period, with titles including Agincourt: The King, The Campaign, The Battle; Conquest: The English Kingdom of France 1417-1450 and England, Arise: The People, The King And The Great Revolt of 1381.

DEFINING BATTLE

FORMIGNY

CASTIL&ON

French determination and military superiority swept the English from Normandy and Gascony in the final phase of the Hundred Years' War

Words by William E Welsh

A force of mounted men-at-arms swept into the town of Fougères in eastern Brittany on 24 March 1449 on a mission of revenge. Led by the notorious mercenary captain François de Surriene, they had been ordered by English paymasters to pillage the town and hold it indefinitely in a bid to intimidate François I of Brittany, a duke who had recently aligned himself with the French crown at the behest of his uncle Constable Arthur de Richemont. The strike was also intended as revenge for the loss of the county of Maine to the French a year earlier.

The idea for the raid came at a time when English fortunes in France were rapidly waning. Following the triumphs of King Henry V and his brother, Duke John of Bedford, in the first two decades of the 15th century, English troops north of the Loire River had now been thrust on the defensive on a wide front.

The English needed time to regroup and the Truce of Tours of 1444, between English King Henry VI and King Charles VII of France, offered a respite. The agreement called for a cessation of hostilities for a two-year period and if the parties agreed, the truce could be extended.

"WHEN THIS DIPLOMATIC OVERTURE FAILED, CHARLES LAUNCHED A THREE-PRONGED INVASION OF NORMANDY"

As part of the armistice, Henry and his principal advisor, William de la Pole, the duke of Suffolk, agreed to return Maine in west-central France to Charles – but the concession had to be kept secret for it would enrage the English. Indeed, English military leaders in France refused to surrender the county and Charles was therefore compelled to take it by force in February 1448.

When Charles complained about the occupation of Fougères the very next year, the English curtly replied that they were well within their rights to seize the town as Brittany was a fief of the English crown. When his diplomatic overture failed, Charles launched a three-pronged invasion of Normandy in July 1449.

In Lower Normandy, Arthur de Richemont was able to retake Fougères and conquer most of the strongholds in the Cotentin Peninsula. Meanwhile, the French royal army besieged Rouen, forcing Edmund Beaufort, the duke of Somerset and the king's lieutenant in France, to withdraw to Caen. Somerset appealed to Suffolk for troops to hold onto Lower Normandy and was sent Sir Thomas Kyriel.

Kyriel landed at Cherbourg on 15 March 1450 with an expeditionary army of 3,225 troops. His orders were to march to the immediate relief of Caen but a French garrison at Valognes 19 kilometres to the southeast lay astride the most direct route. Kyriel, who believed he needed even more forces than what he had on hand to dislodge the French, requested that Somerset send whatever troops he had to assist him. Somerset managed to scrape together 1,800 men from the garrisons of Caen, Bayeux and Vire, and they marched to Kyriel's assistance.

John Talbot falls leading his troops in the main assault against the French field fort at Castillon

BATTLE OF FORMIGNY

French reinforcements turned the tide of the pitched battle that decided the fate of Normandy

01 Culverins shell the English

The English archers drive stakes in front of their position to protect them from a French cavalry charge and then use their daggers and swords to dig a trench, as well as holes that will serve as cavalry traps. French count Jean de Clermont arrives from the west and deploys his troops just beyond the range of the English archers. French artillery commander Giraud de Samian advances his two culverins, which are protected by a detachment of 400 men, to a forward position near the Val stream. Meanwhile, the gunners bombard the English archers in preparation for an attack.

02 English archers charge the guns

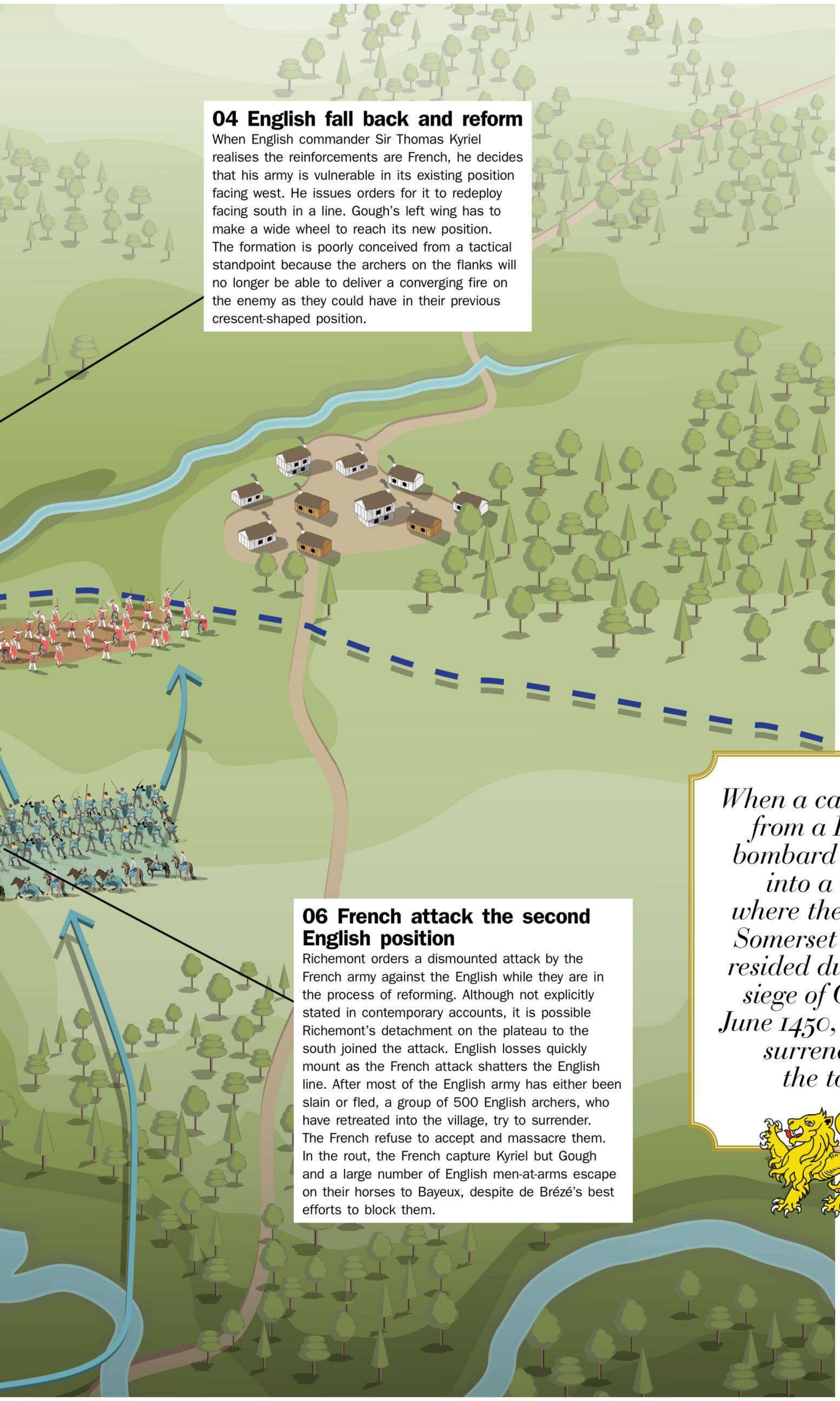
The effective fire of the French culverins inflicts casualties on the wedge of archers on the English left flank led by second-in-command English captain Matthew Gough. Gough orders 500 archers to charge the culverins but to reach them, they must cross the stone bridge over the Val. Maddened by their losses, the English archers storm across the bridge, overwhelm the French troops guarding the guns and drag them back towards the bridge. The loss of the guns comes as a shock to Clermont's soldiers.

03 Richemont reinforces Clermont

Constable Arthur Richemont leads his troops north from Saint-Lô to join Clermont – the English see his banners and mistake his troops for English reinforcements. The constable stops briefly at a plateau south of the battlefield and climbs a windmill to reconnoiter the English position, leaving a detachment of mounted troops on the plateau. Richemont then leads the bulk of his forces through a ford on the Val stream to join Clermont. During a brief conference between the two commanders, Clermont turns over direction of the French forces to the more experienced Richemont.

05 French retake the culverins

Richemont orders Pierre de Brézé to lead a strong force of dismounted men-at-arms and archers to retake the captured guns. The archers who captured the guns are in the middle of the battlefield.
A bloody melee ensues in which the French prevail and retake the two culverins. Richemont rides forward to reconnoiter the English line a second time. He approves a request by de Brézé to be allowed to ride around the English army and capture a small enemy-held outpost astride the Carentan-Bayeux Road to block the retreat of the English.



04 English fall back and reform
When English commander Sir Thomas Kyriel realises the reinforcements are French, he decides that his army is vulnerable in its existing position facing west. He issues orders for it to redeploy facing south in a line. Gough's left wing has to make a wide wheel to reach its new position. The formation is poorly conceived from a tactical standpoint because the archers on the flanks will no longer be able to deliver a converging fire on the enemy as they could have in their previous crescent-shaped position.

06 French attack the second English position
Richemont orders a dismounted attack by the French army against the English while they are in the process of reforming. Although not explicitly stated in contemporary accounts, it is possible Richemont's detachment on the plateau to the south joined the attack. English losses quickly mount as the French attack shatters the English line. After most of the English army has either been slain or fled, a group of 500 English archers, who have retreated into the village, try to surrender. The French refuse to accept and massacre them. In the rout, the French capture Kyriel but Gough and a large number of English men-at-arms escape on their horses to Bayeux, despite de Brézé's best efforts to block them.

The siege of Valognes gave the French ample time to assemble forces to counter the expeditionary army. When Valonges surrendered on 10 April, Kyriel set out for Caen. The English forces slipped past French count Jean de Clermont's army at Carentan on 14 April by traversing the coastal marshes. That night, the English bivouacked near Formigny. On 15 April, Clermont arrived from the east and de Richemont joined him from the south. In the clash that unfolded at Formigny, the English had a slight edge – Kyriel had 5,025 men while Clermont and de Richemont had only 4,200.

Kyriel remained on the defensive throughout the battle, except for a sortie against the highly effective French artillery, and it was a stalemate until the arrival of de Richemont. Unnerved by his appearance, Kyriel ordered his troops to fall back to a new position. While the English were reforming, the French launched a full-scale attack that shattered their line, seizing their decisive victory. The English sent no more reinforcements to Normandy and the French proceeded to mop up the remaining English garrisons in the region. The liberation of Cherbourg on 12 August marked the end of the campaign.

After the fall of Lancastrian Normandy, Charles turned his attention to Gascony. The English had ruled Normandy for just three decades, but they had controlled Gascony for three centuries. The French initially drove the English out in a year-long campaign that ended in August 1451; however, the Gascons begged the English to return. The English sent sexagenarian John Talbot, the earl of Shrewsbury, to Gascony with 3,000 men and they were welcomed in Bordeaux as liberators on 17 October 1452.

When a cannonball from a French bombard crashed into a room where the duke of Somerset's family resided during the siege of Caen in June 1450, the duke surrendered the town

The news of the English return and Gascons' complicity in the matter infuriated King Charles. In anticipation of a French counterattack, John Viscount Lisle, Talbot's son, arrived in March 1453 with 2,000 fresh troops. As the English expected, three French armies invaded Gascony just three months later taking different routes.

Jean de Bueil led the southernmost of the three armies. With 5,000 troops and a powerful artillery train under the command of master of artillery Jean Bureau, de Bueil marched east along the Dordogne River. After capturing Gensac, the French continued east to Castillon where they established a fortified artillery park in preparation for a formal siege against the English garrison in the walled town. The worried townspeople requested Talbot's assistance against their besiegers.



John Talbot tumbles from his saddle and his standard falls to the ground in the ill-conceived English attack at Castillon



ABOVE Constable Arthur de Richemont's talents as a military commander were on display at Formigny

Talbot embarked on a 48-kilometre march to Castillon on 16 July at the head of an Anglo-Gascon army of approximately 6,300 troops. Talbot, who commanded a 1,300-man vanguard, overran the French garrison at the Priory of Saint Laurent north of Castillon. The survivors of the clash ran three kilometres to the artillery park to warn their commander of the threat – only de Bueil was away at the time, so they informed Bureau instead.

The French artillery park in the Dordogne Valley consisted of a ditch and a wooden palisade. Bureau had 300 guns of various types, including handguns, culverins, multibarrelled ribauldequins and siege bombards. When he ordered grooms to remove the horses from inside the artillery park, the English mistook the clouds of dust the horses raised as a sign that the French were retreating.

Although Talbot's subordinate commander Sir Thomas Evringham had advised him to wait until the rest of his army had arrived before assailing the French fort, Talbot ordered an immediate attack against it. Unbeknown to the English, 1,000 Breton horsemen were encamped in the hills north of the town and ready to lend their assistance.

When the English vanguard arrived at the artillery park, it was obvious the French were not retreating. Nevertheless, Talbot ordered his 500 men-at-arms and 800 archers to dismount and form up on the south side of the artillery park for an attack. Clad in a red velvet surcoat and purple velvet cap, Talbot made a conspicuous target



A period depiction shows the pitched battle at Formigny, which led to the fall of Lancastrian Normandy

astride his white horse on which he remained to direct the assault.

Talbot was a former French prisoner of war, having been captured at the Battle of Patay in 1429. As part of the terms of his release, he had promised not to "wear arms" against the French king or his forces. Talbot believed he was technically honouring that pledge by neither wearing armour nor carrying a weapon that day.

Talbot's men stormed the palisade shouting, "A Talbot!" and "Saint George!" The English troops fought hand-to-hand at the walls with the defenders as they tried to pull down sections of the wall to allow those behind them to get inside the fort. French artillery blasted the attackers. Culverin rounds knocked down as many as six attackers at once.

When Lord Kendall, who was commanding the English infantry, arrived on the battlefield, Talbot told him to assault the west side of the fort. Before they could make a real difference, though, the Breton cavalry arrived and the weight of their attack collapsed Talbot's right flank. Talbot was wounded, although sources are conflicted as to how this happened. While one account states that he was struck in the arm by a hand gun or artillery piece, another claims he was hit in the face by a sword blade.

Although wounded, Talbot tried in vain to rally his men but he was soon struck down again. His horse was felled by a culverin shot and the English commander was pinned underneath his mount, unable to free himself. Before any attempt at rescue could be made, a French archer cleaved his head with a battle axe. Seeing their leader fall, the English fled the battlefield. In the ensuing rout, Talbot's son was also slain. Some of the English fled towards a ford on the Dordogne, while others decided to take temporary refuge inside Castillon.

Talbot's piecemeal attack against a fortified enemy had been a reckless decision that had resulted in a major military disaster for the English. They had lost 3,000 men while the French had only lost 500. When the English garrison of Bourdeaux agreed to surrender their city without a fight in mid-October, Charles allowed them to depart by sea with full honours for England. It was a magnanimous gesture considering the long-standing animosity between the French and English.

TREATY OF PICQUIGNY

Despite raising a powerful force capable of resuming the long struggle with France, Edward IV accepted a peace treaty to finally end hostilities

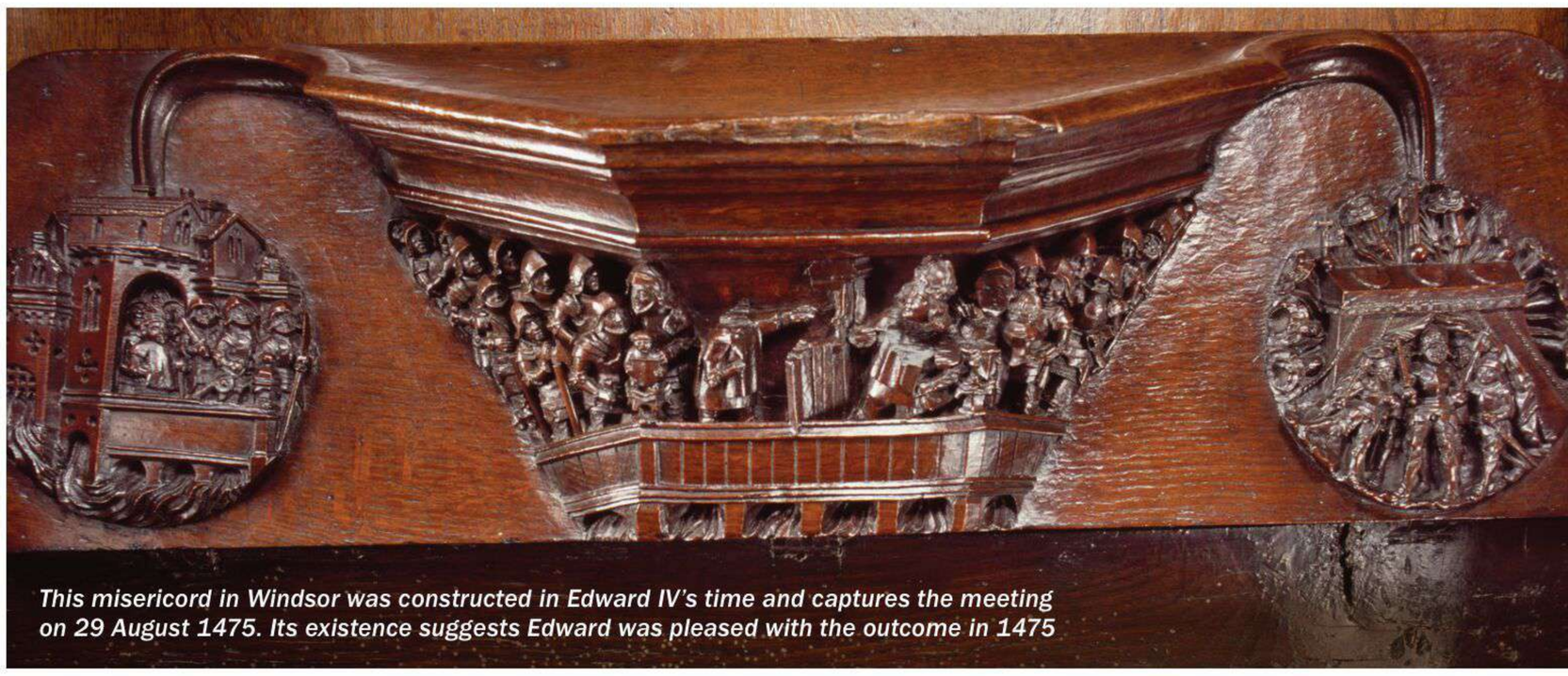
The Hundred Years' War had raged furiously between France and England for generations, with the fortunes of war showering one nation and then the other with its favour. England had once controlled vast swathes of France and seen its king, Henry VI, crowned ruler of France, but it was reeling after the French captured Bordeaux in 1453. England was left with only Calais and an increasingly forlorn claim to the French crown to show for 116 years of sporadic conflict. The war petered out without the signing of a formal treaty – after such a long period of fighting, it was difficult for England to concede defeat.

England was utterly fatigued. The situation was exacerbated by the onset of the Wars of the Roses in May 1455, as Henry VI's grip on his sanity loosened and the ever-restless nobility saw opportunities to shuffle the cards of power to their benefit. England was left weak and tired, while France was able to busy itself repairing its battered country.

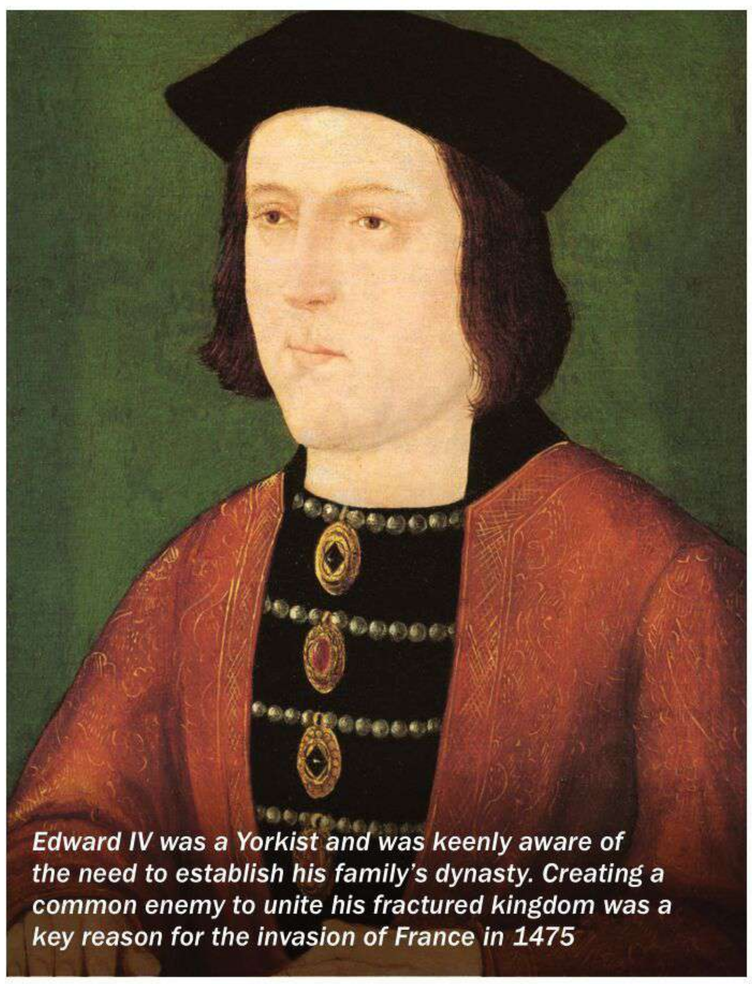
1471 saw Edward IV on the English throne. After years of turmoil, he sought to restore some harmony to his fractured country. One way of uniting the nation – not to mention giving his warlike nobles an outlet for their chivalric ideals – was to present a common enemy: France. This intention was mooted in parliament in 1472 as war funds were debated.

Louis XI of France proudly boasted that he had halted the English invasion with little more than venison and good wine

Edward IV still claimed the crown of France and the machinations of Charles the Bold of Burgundy and his powerful military promised Edward a ready ally in a war with France. Edward raised considerable forces and left England in June 1475 with over 11,000 men to join up with his ally. However, Burgundian support failed to materialise, and the English were left to confront the French alone. As the English army proceeded from Calais, the potent French army crept inexorably closer. But Louis XI, seeing an opportunity to avoid a costly conflict, found a different way of turning back the invasion.



This misericord in Windsor was constructed in Edward IV's time and captures the meeting on 29 August 1475. Its existence suggests Edward was pleased with the outcome in 1475



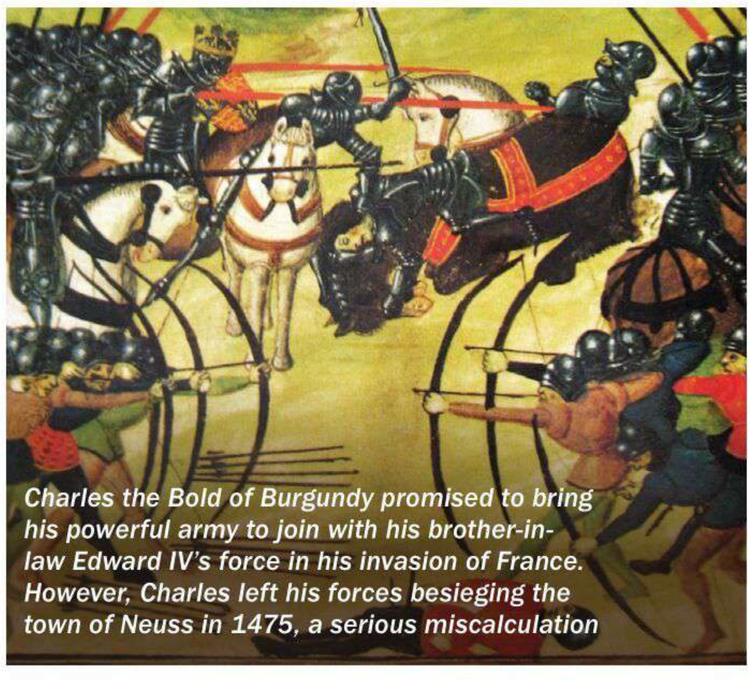
Edward IV was a Yorkist and was keenly aware of the need to establish his family's dynasty. Creating a common enemy to unite his fractured kingdom was a key reason for the invasion of France in 1475

On 29 August at Picquigny, on a specially constructed bridge over the Somme, the two sides came face to face: not for conflict but for negotiation. Louis offered Edward a payment of 75,000 crowns, plus a yearly pension of 50,000 crowns, a binding seven-year peace, removal of trade restrictions and pensions for the leading English nobles. Edward readily agreed, and an amicable conclusion was reached.

There were several advantages in this treaty for Edward. He avoided the possibility of defeat, having lost Burgundy's support in any battle, while gaining significant personal funds, which reduced his need for parliament. Even so, while Edward benefitted in the short term from the campaign of 1475, it significantly weakened his position down the line.

Effectively abandoning the lost territories in France was a blow to the Yorkist reputation, while some of the nobility were disgruntled at this missed opportunity for glory. The public expense of raising an army for no tangible victory, meanwhile, soured attitudes among Edward's subjects. His reputation abroad was also tarnished, and his rejection of the chance of battle was widely interpreted as something of an acknowledgement of French military superiority.

For the French, it was a conclusion to the long tussle with England over dominion of France. With the treaty concluded, Louis could rest assured that there would be no more English attempts to regain their territories. France could move forward as a more powerful nation than it had been before the war erupted in 1337.

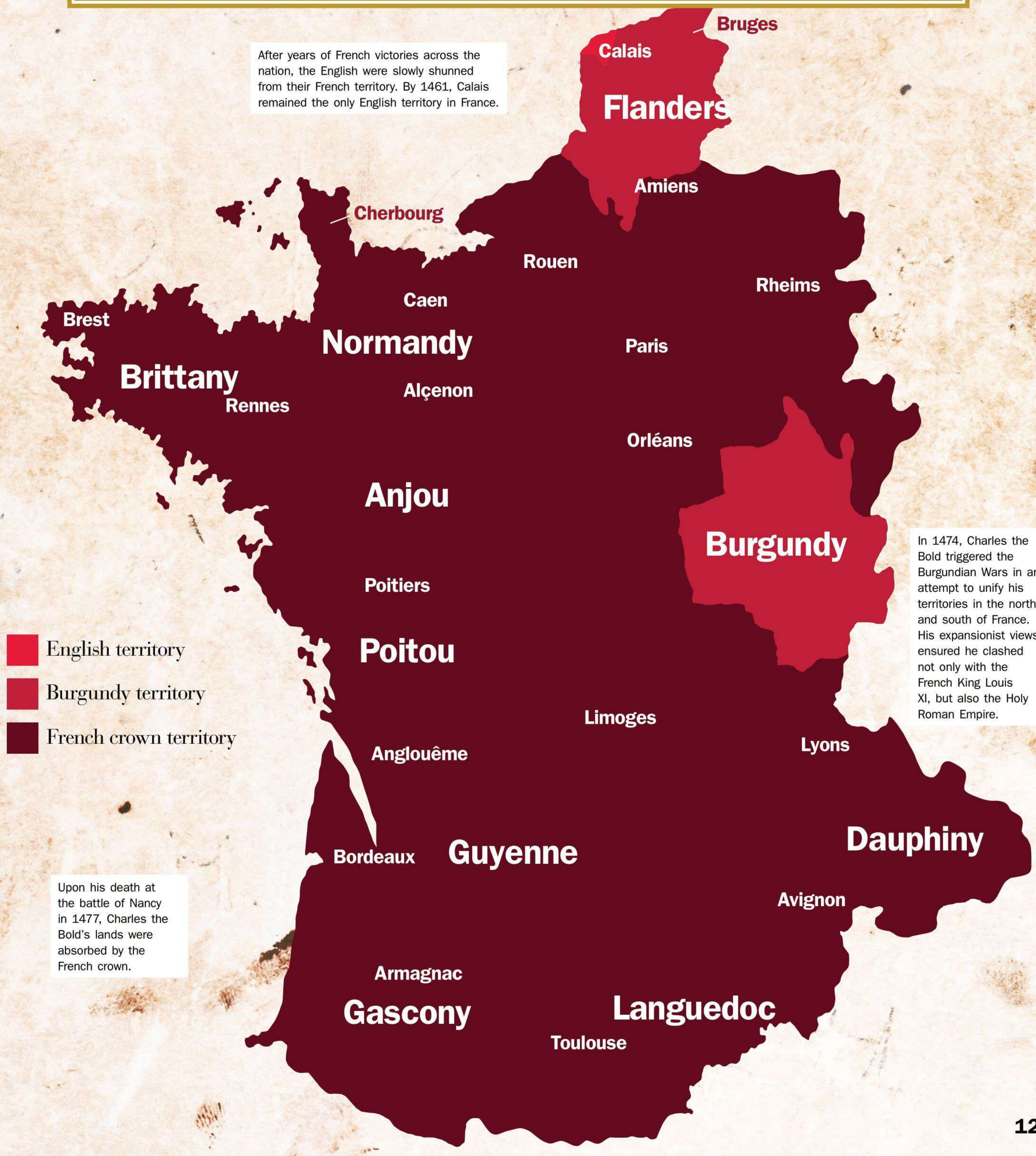


Charles the Bold of Burgundy promised to bring his powerful army to join with his brother-in-law Edward IV's force in his invasion of France. However, Charles left his forces besieging the town of Neuss in 1475, a serious miscalculation

STATE OF PLAY: 1477

With the Treaty of Picquigny signed, France and Burgundy turned upon each other, hungry for territory and the power that went alongside it

After years of French victories across the nation, the English were slowly shunned from their French territory. By 1461, Calais remained the only English territory in France.



In 1474, Charles the Bold triggered the Burgundian Wars in an attempt to unify his territories in the north and south of France. His expansionist views ensured he clashed not only with the French King Louis XI, but also the Holy Roman Empire.

Upon his death at the battle of Nancy in 1477, Charles the Bold's lands were absorbed by the French crown.

LEGACY OF THE WAR

After over a century of intermittent bloodshed, inevitable developments in warfare shaped future conflicts

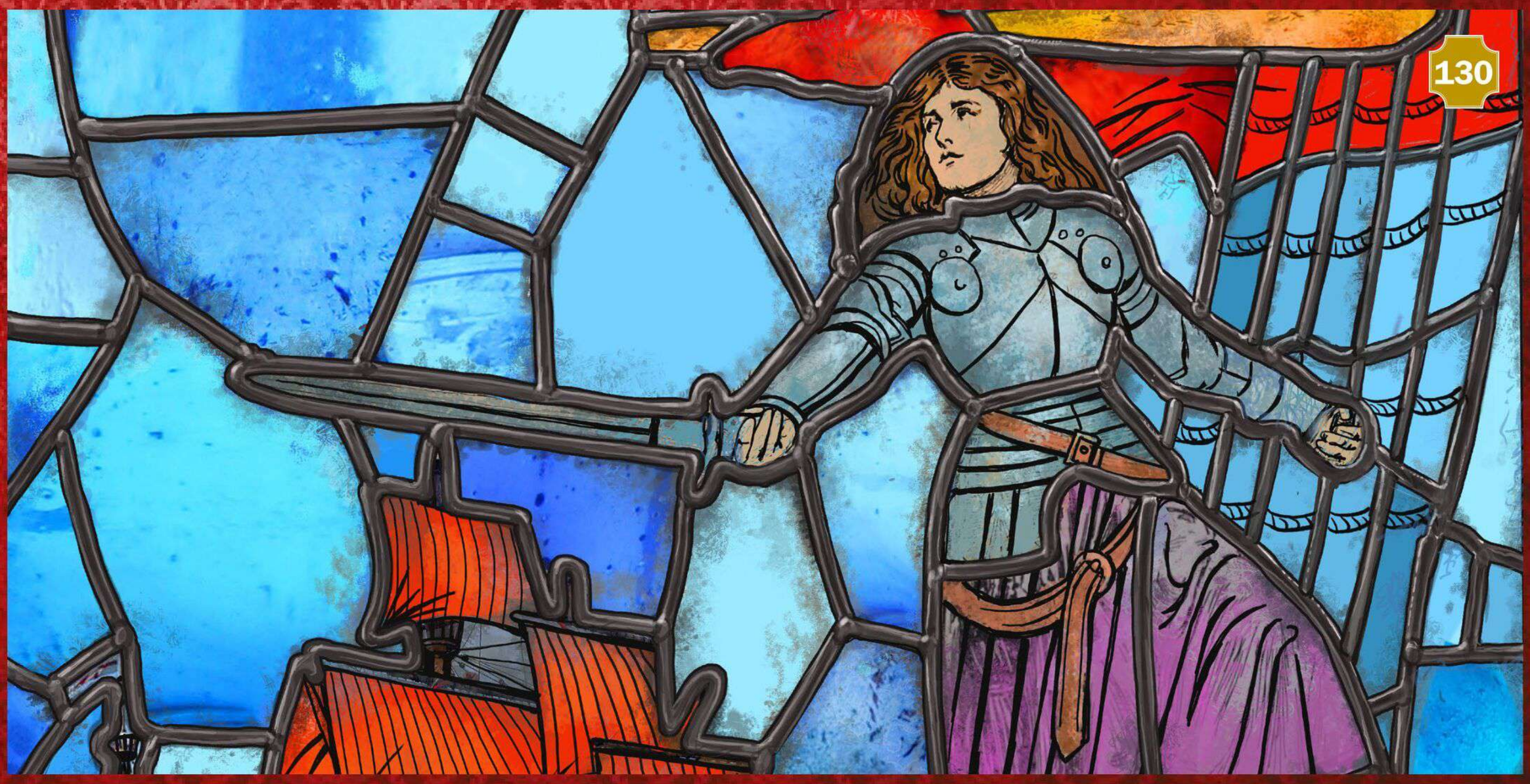
130 Unsung heroes
The forgotten figures that fought and died for their nation

134 France's revamped army
French military reforms enacted in 1445 led to the creation of a well-trained standing army unmatched by the English

136 A weapons revolution
The Medieval arms race that revolutionised warfare

140 The decline of feudalism
After five centuries the feudal system collapsed as a result of internal weaknesses and external pressures




130


140
non essent recipientes
et futuris ministrantes que
que non viderunt nec audiunt
per scripturas edocemur

UNSUNG HEROES

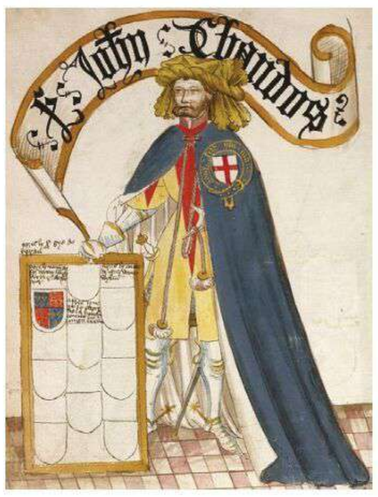
The forgotten figures who fought – and died – for their nation during the Hundred Years' War

John Chandos

C.1320-1369 ENGLISH

A FORMIDABLE FORCE

Chandos was one of the founder knights of the Order of the Garter



A gentleman by birth, John Chandos was a close friend of the Black Prince, Edward, and a fierce fighter in the Hundred Years' War. It was John who masterminded the victory at the Battle of Poitiers in 1356 and eight years later, he led John de Montfort's victory at the Battle of Auray, the conflict that allowed Montfort to become John V, Duke of Brittany. So impressive were Chandos' abilities that when the French began to successfully launch a counterattack in 1369, it was he who Edward called on.

John's formidable reputation led him to become lieutenant of France, the vice-chamberlain of England and the viscount of Saint-Sauveur in the Cotentin.

Despite his illustrious military career, Chandos' death was fairly nondescript. After a night skirmish at Lussac-les-Châteaux in Poitou in 1369, he slipped on a patch of frost and became entangled in his robes. A French squire, James de St Martin, saw his opportunity and stabbed the Englishman in the face.

But Chandos had been in the rare position of being admired by the leaders of both sides of the war. After his passing, Charles V of France reportedly commented that Chandos could have found a way of making lasting peace had he lived.

"JOHN'S FORMIDABLE REPUTATION LED HIM TO BECOME LIEUTENANT OF FRANCE"

Jeanne de Clisson

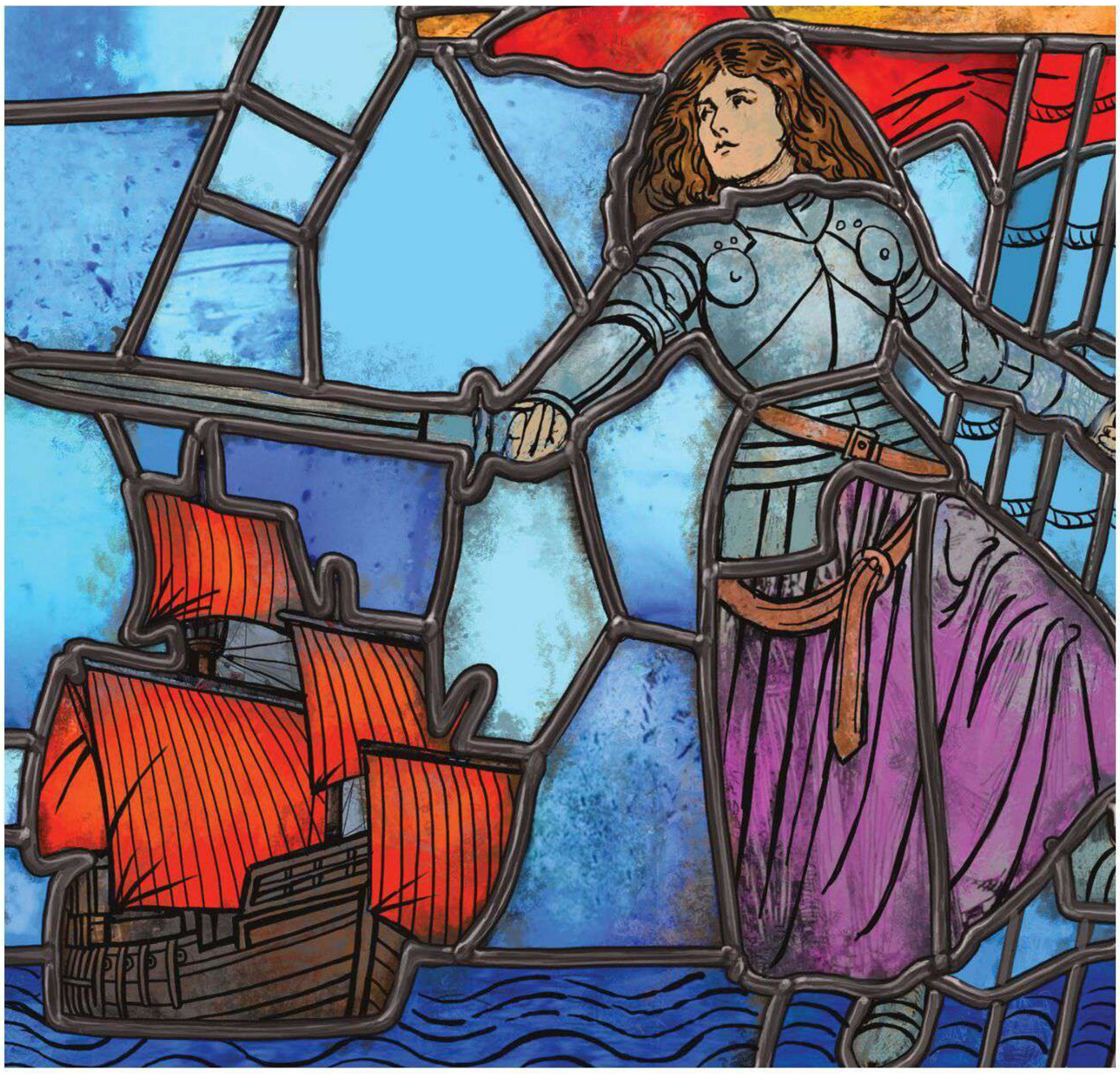
1300-1359 FRENCH

FRANCE'S VENGEFUL FURY

Jeanne and her husband, Olivier, lived in relative peace until he left to fight the English in the Hundred Years' War. When he was captured and ransomed, the French paid for his safe return, but Charles de Blois accused him of defecting to the English and King Philip VI ordered his execution for treason in 1343. Jeanne snapped.

Enraged, she gathered a small force of men and began attacking pro-French forces in Brittany. Then, she took to the seas with a fleet of three ships – hers being called *My Revenge* – and killed entire French crews. She also formed an alliance with the English. She fought as a pirate for 13 years before falling in love with an English noble, Sir Walter Bentley. They married in 1356 and settled into a quiet life, and Jeanne was never heard from again. She never did manage to wreak revenge on Charles de Blois, who ultimately died in battle in 1364.

It was her husband's death that drove Jeanne to attack French troops



Isabeau of Bavaria

C.1370-1435 GERMAN

A TURNCOAT QUEEN?

Isabeau wasn't born to be a queen. Married to Charles VI – otherwise known as Charles the Mad – of France when she was just 15, nothing could have prepared her for the tumultuous life ahead of her. Her husband often fell ill with bouts of madness and so Isabeau was put in charge of the regency council. When civil war broke out, she flitted between the dukes of Burgundy and Orléans, unable to stay with one side for long.

As her husband was indisposed, it was Isabeau who signed the Treaty of Troyes in 1420, an act that has damaged her reputation throughout history. She signed away her son's right to the throne, effectively placing Henry V of England on it instead, although French blood would still have run through the crown as Henry married Isabeau's daughter, Catherine of Valois. Fortunately for France, Henry died before the treaty could be realised.



Isabeau has been painted as a villainess through history

John Stewart, Earl of Buchan

C.1381-1424 SCOTTISH

LEADING SCOTLAND IN THE FRAY

The son of Robert Stewart, Duke of Albany, the de facto leader of Scotland in the absence of a king, John Stewart was a fierce fighter. As the commander of a 6,000-strong Scottish army, he responded to a French call for aid in 1419. After a quiet year, he led a Franco-Scottish army to victory at the Battle of Baugé on 22 March 1421 and was created Constable of France, effectively making him commander-in-chief of the French army.

However, his subsequent campaigns weren't quite so successful. Following failures at Alençon, Montmirail and Île-de-France, he journeyed to Scotland looking for reinforcements. In this he excelled, returning to France in March 1424 with another army. Unfortunately, that would be his last trip to Scotland. On 17 August 1424, John was killed in the Battle of Verneuil in a crushing defeat that saw 4,000 Scots also losing their lives.



An engraving of John from 1795

The Battle of Baugé, John's most impressive victory



John the Fearless

1371-1419 FRENCH

THE DUKE WHO WANTED PARIS

During a fairly peaceful period of the Hundred Years' War, John the Fearless, leader of the Burgundian faction, wanted control of Paris. Since the death of his father, he had been seen as Charles VI's regent in all but name, and his main aim was to make the duchy of Burgundy a more independent region. However, the tide turned and the Armagnacs began to gain power, making civil war loom ever closer.

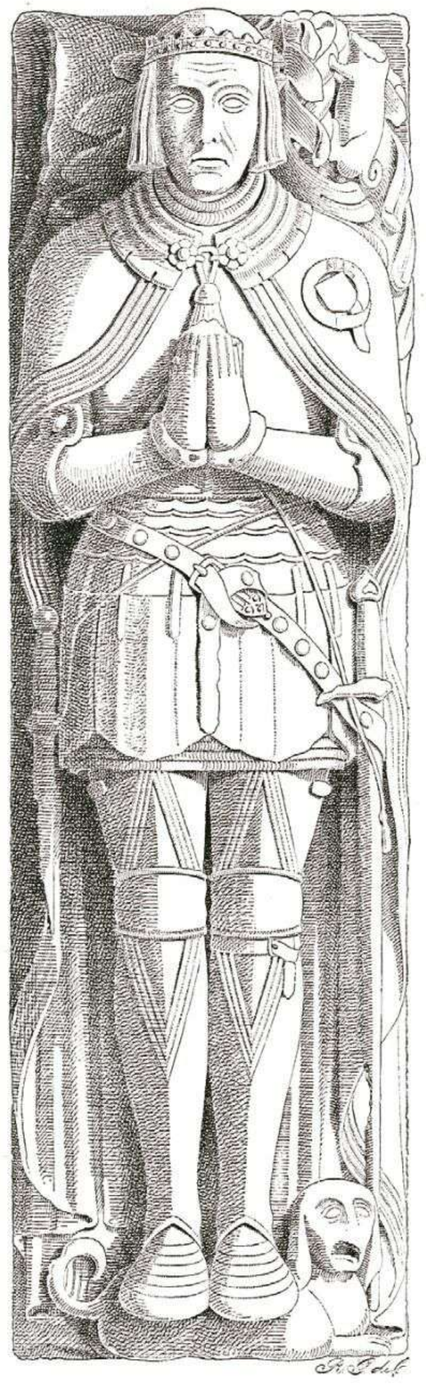
Both factions were negotiating with England when the Battle of Agincourt saw Henry V defeat the French forces, and their horror at the scale of the English demands led them to unite. John and Henry did briefly meet, but parted ways when they realised that their aims were different. Instead, Henry began to invade Normandy in 1417, while John captured Paris in May the next year. As the English advanced across Burgundy, the French factions came together to sign an agreement in July 1419. But the follow-up negotiations were cut short when John was assassinated in September.



John was good at exploiting opportunities

John was assassinated as payback for ordering the murder of Louis I, Duke of Orléans

A drawing of John Talbot's tomb in St Alkmund's Church, Whitchurch, Shropshire



John Talbot, 1st Earl of Shrewsbury

C.1384-1453 ENGLISH

THE ENGLISH ACHILLES

John Talbot had been fighting in wars since he was a teenager, and his prowess was finally acknowledged in 1414 when he was made Lieutenant of Ireland by Henry V. Four years later, he was summoned to join the fight in France, where he participated in many sieges including the one at Meaux where Henry V met his end.

He returned to France when the country had united under Charles VII and Joan of Arc, only to be captured at Patay in 1429, but that didn't stop Talbot from defending Normandy after his release with great courage. For this, he was rewarded with the Earldom of Shrewsbury in 1442 and Henry VI made him the Constable of France in 1445. He was then taken hostage again in Rouen in 1449 and was made to swear not to wear armour against the French king again – something he got around by just commanding the forces instead of fighting.

However, in 1453 he made a last-ditch attempt to save what little England controlled and even managed to retake Bordeaux – until he met Charles VII at the Battle of Castillon, where he was slain on the battlefield and reportedly found lying next to his son, who had died defending him.

Thomas Montagu, 4th Earl of Salisbury

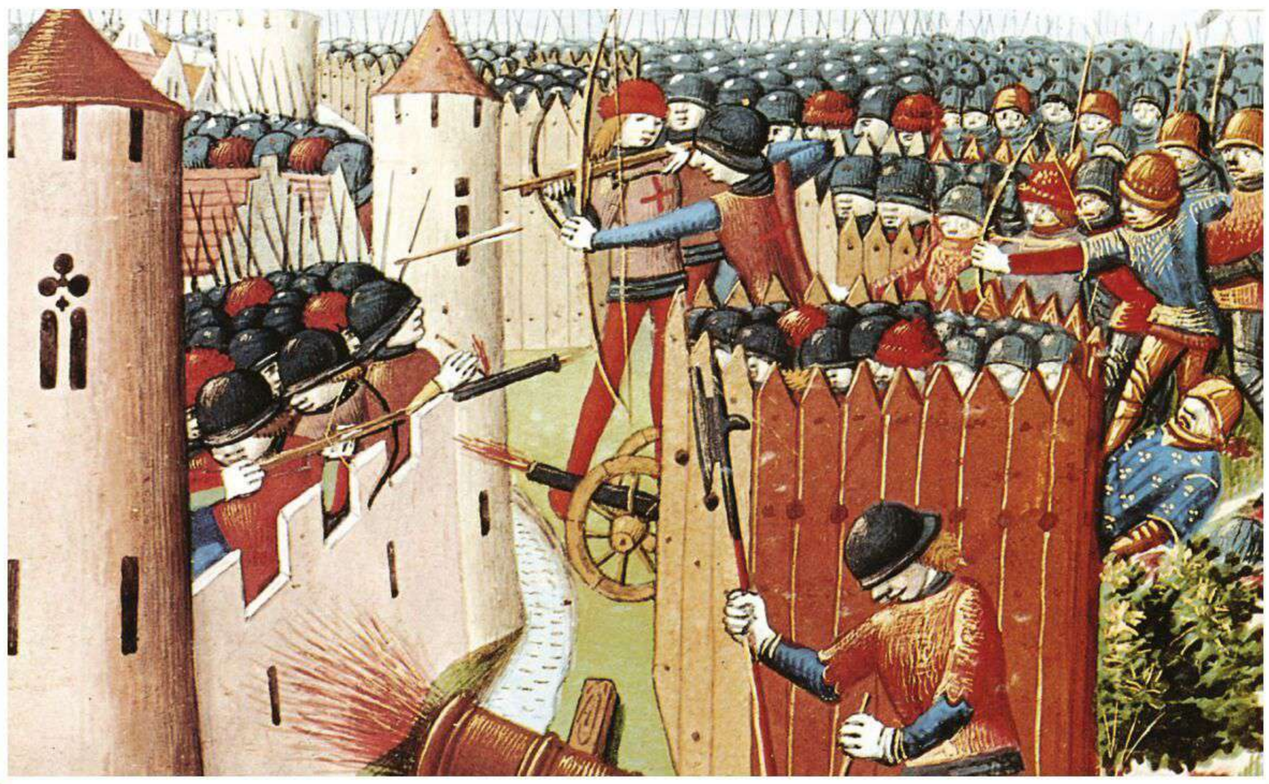
1388-1428 ENGLISH

ENGLAND'S LOYAL SOLDIER

A formidable soldier, Thomas Montagu was made a Knight of the Garter in 1414 and he was soon in France, leading troops in the Hundred Years' War. A veteran of such high-profile skirmishes as the Battle of Agincourt and the sieges of Harfleur and Rouen, Salisbury was appointed Lieutenant-General of Normandy in 1419 and created Count of Perche as part of Henry V's policy of creating Norman titles for his noblemen.

Salisbury spent most of his adult life fighting in France. He even took over the city of Le Mans in 1425 and reconquered lands that France had taken back, as well as claiming new territories with the dukes of Bedford and Sussex. However, it was in the Siege of Orléans that he met his end. On 27 October 1428, a cannonball hit near where he was standing and he died from his injuries just a few days later.

The Siege of Orléans, where Salisbury was mortally wounded



Yolande of Aragon

1384-1442 SPANISH (ARAGONESE)

THE SPANIARD WHO HELPED SAVE FRANCE

Although she doesn't get the recognition she deserves, without Yolande of Aragon's drive to keep the House of Valois on the French throne, the country would have likely fallen to England. A Spanish princess, she married Louis of Anjou, cousin of Charles VI. She tried her best to mediate between the fighting Burgundy and Armagnac factions before ultimately going against John the Fearless. However, in the end she decided to side with the Dauphin, Charles, who was to be disinherited at the Treaty of Troyes.

In 1418, the Dauphin set up his alternative government at Poitiers, near his future mother-in-law Yolande, and the Spaniard took him under her wing, eventually challenging Isabeau's demands for him to return to Paris in 1422 and convincing Charles VI to recognise him as lieutenant-general of the kingdom, which removed the Queen from her regency role.

Yolande was also an early and longstanding supporter of Joan of Arc, financing some her campaigns, and she is remembered for convincing the Bretons to abandon their alliance with England. Perhaps most ingenious, though, was her intelligence-gathering operation, in which she befriended several mistresses of French leaders and used them as spies.

Yolande was also a queen regnant of her native Aragon



La Hire

1390-1443 FRENCH

JOAN OF ARC'S LOYAL COMMANDER



La Hire, as painted in a commission for King Louis-Philippe in 1835

Étienne de Vignolles, better known as 'La Hire' (translating to 'the growler'), entered the service of the Dauphin, Charles, in 1418, when the English army invaded France after a period of relative peace. Thought by some to be the best cavalry soldier in France at the time, he fought at the Battle of Baugé in 1421 and later went on to lead the vanguard in the Battle of Patay, which the French won.

Furthermore, La Hire managed to capture and hold the English fortification of Château Gaillard in 1430. He was imprisoned in Dourdan in spring 1431 and was made Captain General of Normandy by Charles VII in 1438.

However, La Hire is perhaps best known for his unwavering faith in Joan of Arc, and the Gascon captain fought alongside the Maid of Orléans at the siege in 1428-29.

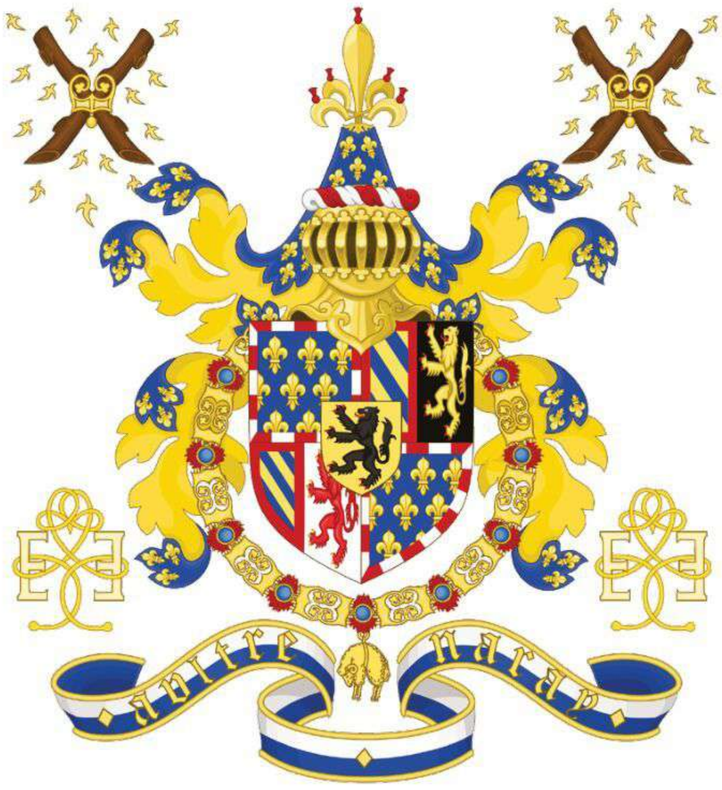
Philip the Good

1396-1467 FRENCH

THE MAN WHO CHANGED SIDES

Philip the Good, son of John the Fearless, was a good soldier and surrounded himself with top advisors like his chancellor, Nicolas Rolin. Above all else, though, he recognised Henry V as the future king of France after the signing of the Treaty of Troyes and after his death, he supported the other English claims. In fact, by 1422, the Anglo-Burgundian alliance actually controlled Aquitaine and all of France north of the Loire, including Paris. In 1430, he even went so far as to hand Joan of Arc over to the English for a hefty ransom of 10,000 gold crowns and she was subsequently burned at the stake.

However, after Joan's death he began to have doubts, and eventually became convinced that the English could never control a land as big as France without more support from the French nobility. And so he decided to change sides. For his support for Charles VII to be crowned, he was paid a handsome sum and his duchy was



Philip's coat of arms after 1430

established as an independent principality. It was under Philip that medieval court life reached its peak, as he surrounded himself with the best artists and musicians that money could buy. In 1430, he also founded a new order of chivalry, the Order of the Golden Fleece.

Charles VII of France

1403-1461 FRENCH

THE TRUE KING OF FRANCE

Disinherited by the Treaty of Troyes in 1420, the Dauphin, Charles, fled to Poitiers to set up his own alternative government, although he was mockingly referred to as the King of Bourges. There he would stay, even when his mother, the Queen, summoned his return to Paris a few years later.

It was Joan of Arc who brought the French together under his banner. Inspired by the peasant girl, the French drove the English north from Orléans and Joan herself took Charles to Reims in 1429 for his coronation. Even her death didn't deter Charles' new followers. In 1437, Charles finally entered Paris, now the French capital once more.



Charles VII, painted circa 1445-50 by Jean Fouquet

As king, Charles made taxes a permanent levy and lessened the power of the papacy in France, augmenting royal power. He also established France's first permanent army and invested heavily in the newfound technology of artillery. It was with the latter that he won Normandy and Aquitaine back from the English, along with the battles of Formigny and Castillon, in 1450 and 1453 respectively, heralding the French victory of the Hundred Years' War.

Jean de Wavrin

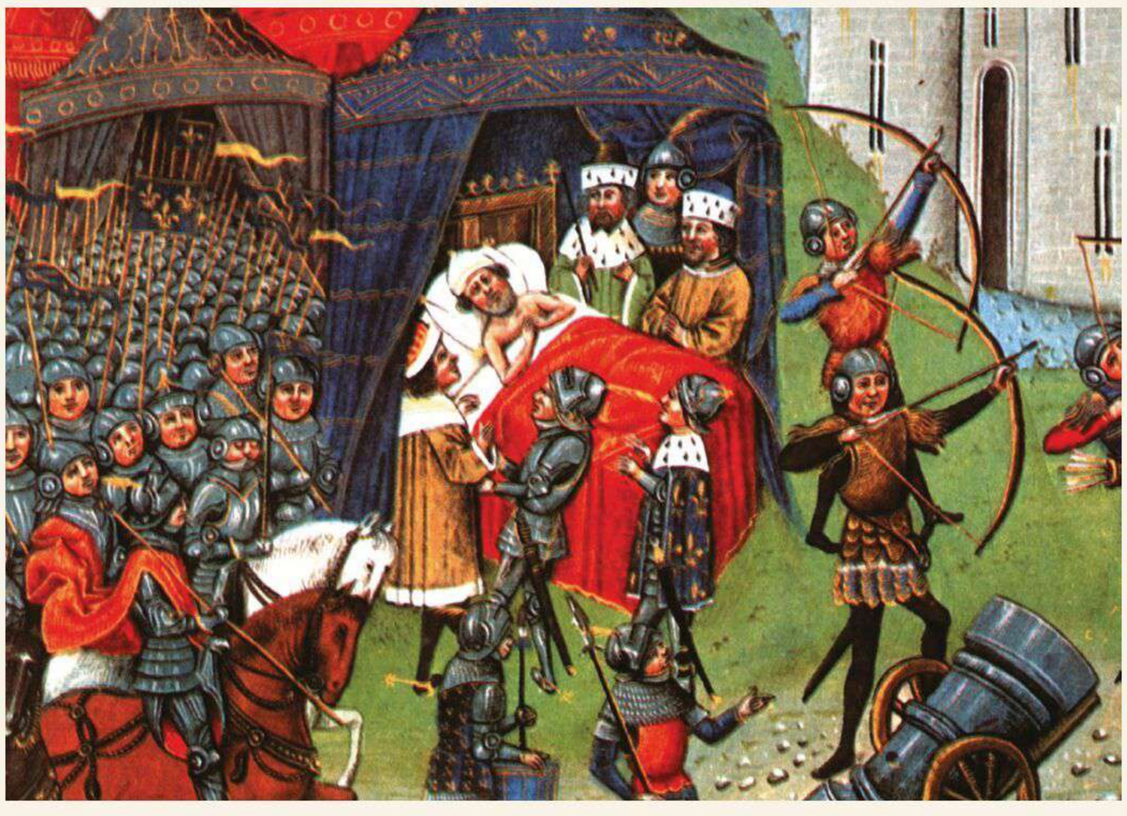
1400-1474 FRENCH

A SOLDIER TURNED CHRONICLER

A definite Anglophile, Jean de Wavrin started out as a humble squire at the Battle of Agincourt, before later taking part in many Burgundian expeditions with their English allies until his marriage in 1435. At this point, he performed many official duties for the dukes of Burgundy instead, including acting as an embassy to the English court and the Pope.

It is possibly the last 25 years of his life that he is most famous for, however. During this time, he compiled his multi-volume chronicle of England, charting the land's beginnings to 1471, including the events of the Hundred Years' War. Unfortunately, he died before it was completed.

***The death of Bertrand du Guesclin, a French commander in the Hundred Years' War, from De Wavrin's* Chroniques d'Angleterre**





France's initial attempt at military reforms in 1439 sparked an uprising known as the Praguerie by nobles who believed the measures threatened their hereditary rights

FRANCE'S REVAMPED ARMY

French military reforms enacted in 1445 led to the creation of a well-trained standing army unmatched by the English

Words by William E Welsh

For three days in October 1449, a mob loyal to Charles VII held sway in Rouen, the capital of the duchy of Normandy. A large French army had bivouacked outside the city and King Charles made his quarters at the monastery of Saint Catherine beyond the walls on the eastern side. After an attempt by the French army to gain entry failed, the mob took matters into its own hands and flung open the gates to the royal army. The English fell back to the citadel. After agreeing to surrender, the English were allowed to march to Caen.

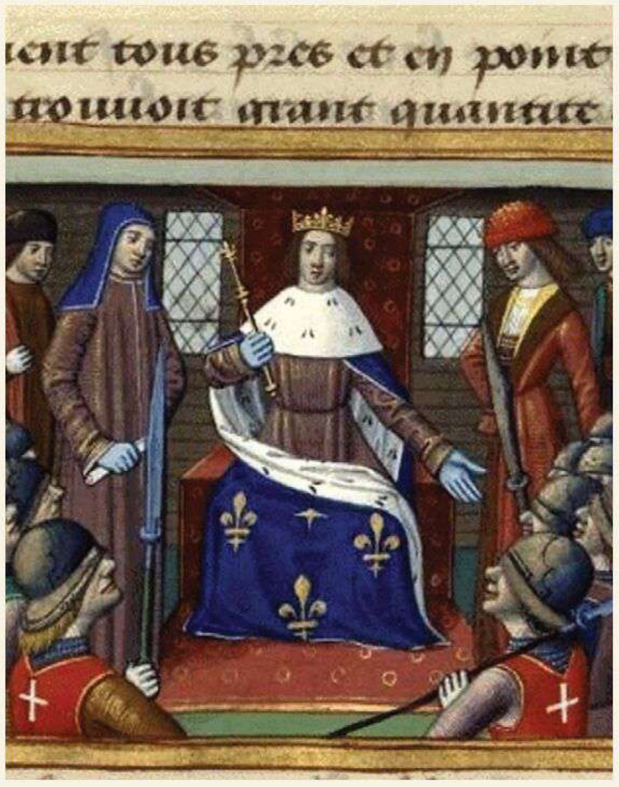
King Charles rode victoriously into the city with his personal bodyguard of 600 horsemen following proudly behind him. The cavalrymen belonged to the newly constituted standing army established by a royal decree of 1445 that established compagnies d'ordonnance as the core of the French royal army. Each horseman carried a spear to which was attached a pennon of red satin with a gold sun. Charles had every confidence that his formidable army would enable him to retake Normandy and Gascony from the invading English.

The catalyst for the creation of the compagnies d'ordonnance can be traced back to the Treaty of Brétigny of 1360 that resulted indirectly in the proliferation of independent bands of mercenaries who preyed on the population of France. In the parlance of the times, these bands of unemployed troops were known as routiers or écorcheurs. They extorted money through protection payments and pillaged town and countryside alike. The result of their depredations was a general distrust among the commoners of the king's army. The bands of unemployed and former soldiers became a curse of great proportion and one in need of a comprehensive remedy.

For Charles VII, the problem had been acute since the liberation of Orléans in 1429. The French crown needed loyal, disciplined troops. The king had traditionally fielded troops by calling up feudal levies and hiring mercenaries and foreign troops. But the lawlessness exhibited by unemployed mercenaries during times of peace or military truce, as well as the need to exert greater control over the aristocratic class, made it imperative that the crown develop a better approach to recruiting and retaining royal forces.

"HE ALSO TOOK STEPS TO ELEVATE THE ARTILLERY"

In the wake of the Truce of Tours in 1444, King Charles issued a key reform measure on 5 January 1445 known as the compagnies d'ordonnance. This body of military reforms led directly to the establishment of a nascent standing army composed of royal cavalry loyal only to the monarch. The measures described that the companies were to be composed of



The franc-archers were commoners who were exempt from paying land taxes in return for their willingness to train and serve in the king's army

A new breed of soldier

Charles VII undertook military reforms that led to the creation of uniform cavalry and militia in service of the crown

The ordinance of 1445 created royal companies of cavalry composed of 100 lances fournies. As specified in the regulations, a lance consisted of six mounted men: one man-at-arms, one squire, two archers, a page and a valet. The crown initially raised 15 companies, totalling 9,000 men, who formed the nucleus of the French standing army. Additional companies of cavalry were added in subsequent years.

In 1448, the crown issued an ordinance creating and governing a force of militia infantry known as franc-archers. Unlike cavalry companies that were billeted throughout the country, the franc-archers remained in their homes. They were exempt from the taille (land) tax and were supposed to supply their own armour and weapons – if they were too poor, these were to be provided by their parish. The formula was that every 50 households or hearths should furnish one archer and one crossbowman.

The franc-archers trained and drilled weekly and as the system matured, it was expanded to include pikeman, handgunners and crossbowmen.



A lance was composed of a heavily armoured knight accompanied by five lightly armed mounted attendants

lances fournies and prescribed how they were to be paid, to whom they reported, and who was responsible for them.

Charles stood to reap tangible benefits from a standing army. He would have a force composed of veteran cavalry that was well-equipped and highly mobile. In return, the commoners would have an army that would refrain from injustices and protect them from all manner of brigands.

The reforms set forth in the compagnies d'ordonnance restricted military recruiting to the king and authorised representatives, thereby ensuring that the monarch was the only individual within the realm who could to wage war. This helped neutralise the threat from powerful aristocrats with their own armies. The reforms also included provisions outlining the obligations and responsibilities of the provinces and localities vis-à-vis the standing army. They would fund, equip and billet the royal troops.

Constable Arthur de Richemont oversaw the establishment of the first royal companies. He reviewed the existing troops employed by the crown with an eye towards purging the army of unqualified and undesirable men. Individuals and units that had experience and the proper equipment were retained, while those who did not meet minimum standards were dismissed.

The crown instituted a means by which the troops could receive regular pay, thus giving them a strong reason to refrain from pillaging – the provinces paid them through a mix of payment in kind and cash.

To maintain the standing army it was necessary to expand the bureaucracy associated with the royal army and so the crown hired commissioners, comptrollers and treasurers to oversee the taxation of the local jurisdictions responsible for maintaining the companies. Constables and marshals also conducted regular musters and inspections to ensure the men serving in the army were of high quality.

In 1448, the Estates General passed an additional reform establishing "franc-archers" as the king's infantry. The franc-archers functioned in many respects like traditional feudal levies but new standards were issued regarding recruitment, training and payment.

At the same time as Charles was working to improve the cavalry and infantry, he also took steps to elevate the artillery. Major technological advances in gunpowder and artillery in the 15th century made it imperative that the French royal army had the best equipment that money could buy. The king retained two brothers, Jean and Gaspard Bureau, as agents of the crown and put them in charge of purchasing high-quality bombards and smaller guns.

The reforms that created France's standing army were of an administrative and political nature and not of an innovative tactical nature. While they didn't change the way in which the cavalry or infantry fought, they did introduce standards that enhanced the quality of the troops. The reforms did make the king's army more effective and capable of striking with great speed and force, as was demonstrated in the campaigns in Normandy and Gascony.

The establishment of the compagnies d'ordonnance was the single most important reform of Charles VII's reign. Enhancements to all three branches of the military resulted in an unstoppable army during the final phase of the Hundred Years' War, enabling Charles VII to drive all English forces from French soil, except for those remaining in Calais.

18+

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media
Protect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages
Brand new content
One site



AVXLIVE.ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open https://avxlive.icu

THE WEAPONRY REVOLUTION

Technology has always found advancement in the crucible of war, and the Hundred Years' War would see the birth of a revolution in early modern weaponry

When the Hundred Years' War began the armies that dominated on European battlefields were led by feudal warrior-aristocrats. These men and their followers usually made up the martial core of an army, which would take to the field in a time when heavily armoured cavalry charges could make or break a battle. However, this would soon change as the conflict saw advances in technology and weapons alongside new battlefield tactics that would be the beginning of a weaponry revolution that would come to shape Europe.

The English came to dominate the early engagements with the fearsome longbow, whose range and armour penetration were the bane of the French heavy cavalry. Infantry also began to be utilised by the English with weapons like the billhook, a staff weapon with both a broad cutting head and stabbing point used to negate the heavy French armour. Gunpowder also made its impact on the European map, with rudimentary cannons and handguns becoming more popular in the latter half of the conflict.

These new and fearsome weapons could only be withstood by the most heavily fortified castles and quickly redrew both the continent's map and the handbook of military engagement. The Medieval military world that had relied on brute strength and force of arms was now evolving.

Gunpowder

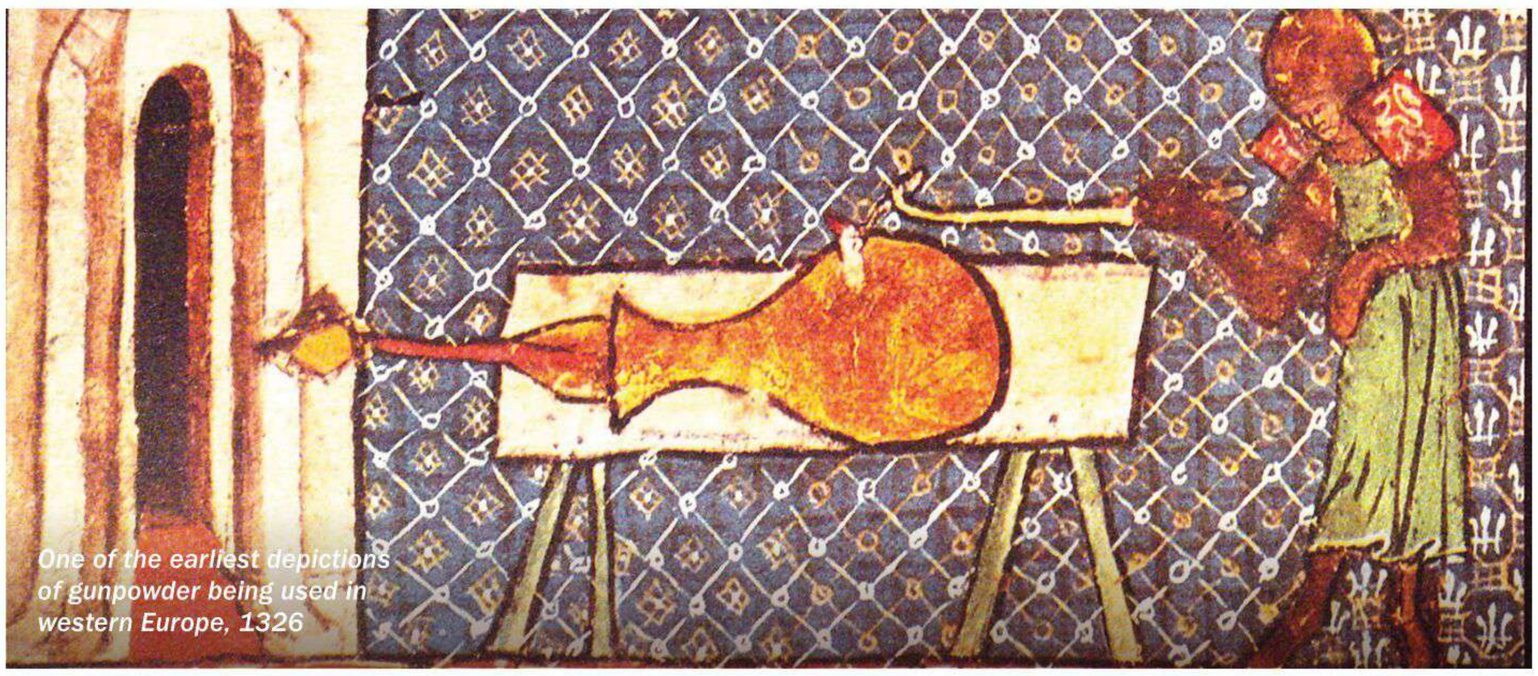
1267

ENGLAND/FRANCE/BURGUNDY/SCOTLAND

Gunpowder would be a substance that would come to dominate warfare around the globe. Arriving in Europe in 1267 with Roger Bacon's recipe, it would not come to be used in Western military engagements until the 1320s. Scottish chroniclers record the English using a weapon called a 'crakys of wer', a gunpowder weapon that let off a terrific sound, or 'crack'. Cannons soon became a staple of an army's artillery train alongside catapults and trebuchets.

At this time gunpowder artillery was not used to bombard and knock down walls but to fire over them in order to destroy buildings within the town or city. It was also used in conjunction with more established artillery pieces, but it doesn't seem to have had much of an impact on the length of a siege due to the lack of breaching power. These early cannons would have been small and inexpensive, costing around half as much as a ballista or catapult. Gunpowder had an advantage over conventional artillery in that the noise it created took a telling toll on enemy moral, especially those unused to seeing this terrifying new type of weapon.

By the 15th century the technology was improving. In 1415 Henry V used 12 guns to devastate the buildings of Harfleur, forcing the garrison to seek surrender terms. It wasn't just the besiegers who would utilise gunpowder – artillery was just as effective in defence. Henry V actually directed his artillery at Harfleur's walls not to demolish them but to knock out the answering fire from the French defenders.



One of the earliest depictions of gunpowder being used in western Europe, 1326

Just ten years later gunpowder technology had advanced enough to threaten a castle's walls, as the French discovered to their cost when lost the town of Saite-Suzanne in Mayenne. "The count of Salisbury had nine large bombards and many large cannon and fowlers [lighter cannon] sited and set up. These bombards and cannons, after eight or ten days, began to fire incessantly, day and night, so that they beat down the walls of the said town from more than a bow-shot away."

By the end of the 1440s gunpowder artillery was in its element. At the beginning of the decade Harfleur had resisted three months of bombardment, but in 1449 it was brought back under French control in just 17 days. 1450 saw an unprecedented wave of the French reoccupying many towns and castles with the help of artillery. Around 100 – many that required lengthy sieges to capture in the first place – fell to the Franco-Burgundian forces. The centuries-old reliance on defensive fortifications was thrown into jeopardy. Earthworks and trenches were dug to protect the new, larger artillery pieces as gunpowder fast replaced conventional catapults and trebuchets.

Crossbow

6TH CENTURY CE

FRANCE

While the English made extensive use of the longbow, the French were quick to utilise the crossbow as their missile weapon of choice in the Hundred Years' War. A complicated weapon, the crossbow's bow was reinforced with horn and sinew, meaning it would pack a large punch for its size. Stirrups at the front end of the bow were used to secure the crossbow during loading, where the string would be secured to the trigger mechanism by crouching, fastening it to a hook on the user's belt and then standing up. This would leave the archer vulnerable, and crossbowmen often carried a pavise (a large shield worn on the soldier's back) during battle for protection.

Usually able to match ranges with the longbow, the crossbow provided intense armour penetration power. Able to pierce plate armour at 200 yards, the crossbow was the bane of armoured warriors during the Medieval period, so much so that Pope Innocent III called for them to be banned in the Second Lateran Council, although this might have been as much to do with not killing other Christians than the weapon being overpowered.

The advantage of the crossbow was its ease of use and stopping power. Relatively little training, especially compared to the longbow, was needed to master the weapon. Being able to have a low-born warrior go toe-to-toe with a fully trained and armoured knight and come out on top could be a huge advantage. To offset this, the rate of fire of around four bolts per minute meant that the archers could become exposed.



Archers could use a winch mechanism to help them reload



These English cannons were abandoned by Thomas Scales during the failed siege of Mont Saint-Michel in 1434

Cannon

14TH CENTURY

ENGLAND/FRANCE/BURGUNDY/SCOTLAND

When cannons first appeared on the battlefields of France they were not the game-changers they would grow to be. However, their development and effectiveness increased steadily throughout the 14th century and exploded in the 15th century. Key changes made to the design and manufacture of the guns made them formidable. The first cannons used were a lot shorter and stubbier, and so lengthening the barrels increased power, accuracy and range. The longer barrels also helped with loading and increased the rate of fire. The final improvement was in metallurgy and experimentation with different metals and compounds, which greatly increased a cannon's strength and how easy it was to cast.

These marked improvements can be seen in the number of cannons used in the conflict. In 1382–88, the English crown purchased 87 cannons. By 1409 it was agreed that around 250 guns were needed to take a stronghold, a massive increase in a very short space of time.



A handgun barrel in between two small cannons, all from the 15th century

Handgonne

14TH CENTURY (EUROPE)

ENGLAND/FRANCE

Developed alongside cannons, handgonnes (or handguns) were becoming more prevalent during the Hundred Years' War. In its simplest form it consisted of a tube of metal that was either attached to the end of a pole or a crossbow-like stock. Like the cannon, they used gunpowder that, when ignited, shot a lead or metal pellet at the enemy. The noise and confusion caused by these weapons would have probably been more effective than the projectile. Longer barrels introduced in the 15th century helped with power and accuracy, but they were far from replacing bows as an army's main missile weapon.

Despite their limitations, handguns did see increased use only a few years after their introduction. Jean Froissart makes a claim that 400 handguns, also known as hackbuts or hagbuts, were used by the English at the Siege of St Malo, a not inconsequential number for the period.

Bow

A Medieval war bow was usually made of yew wood from Europe. The thin layer of living outer sapwood resisted tension – perfect for the flat 'back' of the bow. The dead inner heartwood resisted the massive compressive forces acting against it at full draw, making it an ideal timber for the rounded 'belly' of the bow. This formed a naturally occurring spring.

Bowstring

Bowstrings were made from hemp or linen. The strands were coated in beeswax and twisted together to form a strong loop with no knots or joins that could result in weakness.

Arrows

The arrows used in military archery varied greatly in size, shape and weight, but the average length was 30 inches. Often half an inch thick at the point, they were armed with hand-forged steel heads, each designed to do a specific job.

Fletchings

The flights or 'fletchings' of the arrow were made of goose, swan or peacock feathers. The feathers were fastened to the arrow shaft using animal skin glues and bound firmly in place with silk.

Arrow strength

With such powerful bows, the wooden ends of the arrows would often split and break on release. To protect against this, a thin sliver of flattened cow horn would be inserted into a slot cut at the base of the arrow going against the grain of the wood, thereby strengthening the arrow and preventing it splitting.

Nocks

To protect the soft yew wood from being damaged by the bowstring when being shot, the tips of cattle horn were used. These horn 'nocks' had a single groove cut into one side, into which the bowstring would be looped or tied.

The British longbow

King Henry's fearsome archers were nothing without their expertly crafted weapon

Head to head

The unskilled French archers were no match for the English and Welsh longbowmen

French crossbow

Draw weight: 1,000lb
Firing rate: 2-3 arrows per minute
Range: Approx. 380 yards

English longbow

Draw weight: Up to 180lb
Firing rate: 8-10 arrows per minute
Range: 250-350 yards

Why were longbows so deadly?

War bow expert Mark Stretton explains the lethal range at which longbowmen could strike their enemy

An arrow fired at point-blank range or from around ten to 20 yards is going to be the most lethal for penetrative impact, as the arrow will not have lost any velocity at such a short distance but will have straightened up enough to be able to hit its target square on, giving the maximum delivery of energy. However, there is no maximum lethal range if the arrow can be shot over 220–240 yards. The reason for this is that once the arrow had gone over 220 yards, it would then impact with the same force as if it was shot at 40 yards. At 40 yards, the arrow does not have quite the same energy as at ten yards, but there is hardly any difference and it's still lethal. The reason for this is simple. For the arrow to be able to make a distance of over 220 yards it must be shot at a 43-degree trajectory, which then means that it will reach a certain altitude before returning to the ground. By achieving that altitude the arrow will fall at terminal velocity, so it cannot fall any faster no matter how high it reaches. This means that the kinetic energy of an arrow will be the same at any distance over 220 yards, meaning it is therefore still deadly. Add the fact that heavy cavalry will be riding into the shot and the penetrative force is even greater.

Arrowheads of the Medieval period

Take a closer look at Medieval arrowheads and find out how each was made and used



Lozenge-shape heavy bodkin

Heavy, large and with four sharpened edges, this long bodkin point was developed purely to punch holes right through steel plate armour. The arrowhead socket is formed from a flattened spoon shape then rolled into a cone and fitted over the wooden arrow shaft. When used with a half-inch-thick arrow weighing almost a quarter of a pound and shot from a true military war bow, this would have been the equivalent of a Medieval rocket-propelled grenade.



Type 10

This was perhaps the most common arrowhead of the war as it was simple and fast to make and highly effective against the armour of the period. The Type 10 was a simple bodkin – a four-sided point and a rolled socket. Forged by a master arrowsmith, this was the evolution of the needle-bodkin arrowhead. As chainmail armour gave way to plate armour, the Type 10 arrowhead found its way into the Medieval arms race.



Type 16

This arrowhead has a very distinct difference from the bodkins. It contained barbs on either side, which made it incredibly difficult to remove from whichever target it may have pierced. The barbs would most likely have been fire welded to the head separately. The popularity of such a head is unknown, but surviving examples of Type 16s do surface from time to time. This may have been a military-adapted version of a hunting head.



Tudor bodkin

As with the Type 10, this arrowhead would also have been cheap and fast to produce. According to master arrowsmith Mark Stretton, once the socket has been formed in the usual way, the red-hot arrowhead is placed into a press, or 'swage', which is then hammered shut. The corners are then cut and ground to produce the sharpened edges. This type of head would have been mostly ineffective against plate armour but would pierce many types of textile armour, such as padded gambesons.



Et jeune devint estre comme
le chief legnel devint tous les

THE END OF FEUDALISM

After five centuries, the feudal system collapsed as a result of internal weaknesses and external pressures

Words by Derek Wilson

In its origins, feudalism was a means of enabling leaders to maintain a permanent hold on conquered territory. A king claimed all the land won in battle and parcelled it out to tenants-in-chief among his followers in return for their provision of military service. The tenants-in-chief in turn distributed land rights to their retainers, who guaranteed to provide an agreed number of armed men for their master's service.

The whole system was thus predicated on violence – all major landholders were warlords. This had two mutually contradictory results: it provided a measure of stability in troubled times but it also encouraged armed conflict between kings and nobles. The Hundred Years' War was the longest and most tenacious of those conflicts but as it raged on, the world was changing.

Several internal changes chipped away at the feudal system. As the years passed, landholders thought of themselves more as landowners and wanted to pass their estates on to their sons. They also added to their little empires by marriage. When a magnate died without a male heir, relatives frequently contested the rights of inheritance with little reference to the rights of the feudal overlord. Claimants increasingly looked to the law when staking their claims and, with the passage of time, legal wrangling started to become more complex.

As landowners developed their estates, they were reluctant to go on military campaigns and commuted this commitment to financial payment. This led kings to rely more on mercenaries – corps of professional soldiers, such as Genoese crossbowmen – to fight their battles. Rulers instead looked to the raising of money to pay their armies rather than calling on those tied to them by feudal obligation and so they levied taxes and borrowed from bankers.

However, they also relied heavily on the spoils of war, which meant pillaging towns, villages and farms, as well as ransoming captives. Since mercenaries only fought for money, they tended to be unreliable. Towards the end of the Hundred Years' War, the standing army began to make an appearance, thus finally ending the connection of landholding and military commitment, which was the essential element of feudalism.



A farmer uses an ox-drawn wheeled plough on his field in the foreground, while people tend vines, keep sheep and prepare to sow corn in the distance

LEGACY OF THE WAR

But war was changing in other ways. In the early years of the conflict, mounted and armoured knights formed the aristocracy of the battlefield, their charge a devastating and often decisive feature. Crossbowmen were frequently used in the initial stages of a battle to soften the enemy up so that the cavalry could attack a confused and dispirited horde.

The difference between cavalry and infantry was as much social as it was military. As Barbara W Tuchman wrote, "Protected by plate armour and the pride of chivalry, the noble felt himself invulnerable and invincible and became increasingly contemptuous of the foot soldier. He believed that commoners, being excluded from chivalry, could never be relied upon in war. As grooms, baggage attendants, foragers, and road-builders – the equivalent of engineer corps – they were necessary, but as soldiers in leather jerkins armed with pikes and billhooks, they were considered an encumbrance who in a sharp fight would 'melt away like snow in sunshine'."

However, it was the development of the longbow with its armour-piercing power, longer range and rapidity of fire that changed military tactics and undermined the superiority of the mounted warrior. A brave, lightly armed peasant equipped with a well-honed axe or two-metre pike could be as effective in the melee as a knight in unwieldy full armour.



A man carrying turnips in the Tacuinum Sanitatis, *a Medieval handbook on health*

Shrivelling chivalry

The chivalric code of honour never did more than provide a thin veneer for the brutal business of war

At the end of the 14th century, Geoffrey Chaucer described one of the characters in his *Canterbury Tales* thus:

A knight there was and that a worthy man
Who from the time that he first began
To ride forth loved chivalry,
Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy...
He was a very perfect, gentle knight...

300 years earlier, scholar and poet Peter of Blois painted a very different picture of feudal knights as "oppressing the poor subjects of Christ, and miserably and unmercifully afflicting the wretched, in order to sate their illicit lusts and extraordinary desires in the sorrows of others." The contrast between the real and the ideal could scarcely be greater throughout the Hundred Years' War.

The brutality of a conflict carried out to satisfy the competing ambitions of kings and nobles was given an air of high-minded virtue by poets, troubadours and churchmen. It was the Church that tried to contain and direct the bloody business of killing, maiming and looting within well-defined bounds. Knightly qualities were taking up arms against the enemies of Christianity – especially in crusades – loyalty towards feudal overlords, supporting just causes and defending the weak. Within the knightly caste, such values were often displayed, as when, for example, the Black Prince entertained his captive, John II, to a banquet and humbly served the king at table.

Heroic ideals were kept alive by orders of chivalry such as the English Order of the Garter and the Burgundian Order of the Golden Fleece. But the changing style of warfare drained chivalry of its mystique and criticism mounted from the very institution that had once praised it – the Church. Preachers railed against the dangerous and vainglorious spectacle of the tournament and complained that contemporary men-at-arms were a pale reflection of the knights of old. But it was not men of war who had changed – it was war itself.

In fact, there were few pitched battles during the war – most of an army's time and energy was devoted to the chevauchée and sieging. The chevauchée was a pillaging raid during which invaders attacked ill-defended farmsteads, villages and towns in search of plunder and food to sustain them. The fact that modern metal detectors keep discovering small caches of valuables is testimony to the frequency with which Medieval householders had to bury their precious objects on receiving warning of marauders.

These raids by mounted knights did have the politico-military objective of demonstrating to the subjects of an opposing ruler how incapable he was of defending his own people. Country folk had some chance of escaping invaders if they could reach the comparative safety of a walled town or castle but such strongholds were subjected to siege – if they were worth the effort.

Most Hundred Years' War campaigns were fast-moving affairs and a successful siege took time, either because siege engines like trebuchets had to be deployed or because blockades had to be maintained to starve the inhabitants out. The dramatic development that sped them up – and which had an even more devastating effect in open warfare – was the invention and development of the cannon.

These weapon were first deployed by Edward III in 1346 and they were increasingly used by both sides and in greater numbers. The combination of this and other innovations changed the whole character of warfare and the relationships of



An illustration in the Luttrell Psalter *depicting workers ploughing the fields*



The plague at Tournai in 1349

those in battle – both military personnel and innocent civilians.

Yet the biggest game-changer of all was the Black Death. With 30 to 50 per cent of the population wiped out, the shock to all those who survived the plague was immense but, as well as the distress, this catastrophe would have profound social and economic consequences.

The drastic shortage of labour brought into play the inexorable law of supply and demand, causing agricultural workers and artisans to realise that they had bargaining power. Without their labour, crops would rot in the fields, sheep would not be shorn, cloth would not be woven, swords and armour would not be forged. This unprecedented turn of events took rulers by surprise.

Their first reaction was to try to resist change. Edward III issued the Ordinance of Labourers in 1349, which attempted to peg wages at their pre-plague levels and forbade workers to leave their own towns and villages in order to sell their services to the highest bidders. The royal command was a dead letter. This probably came home to the king when he ordered the corporation of London to clean up the streets and the deserted houses where rats and other animals were foraging among the stinking rubbish and rotting food left by the dead. The answer of the harassed councillors was, "Who will do the cleaning up? We've lost 30,000 of our citizens."

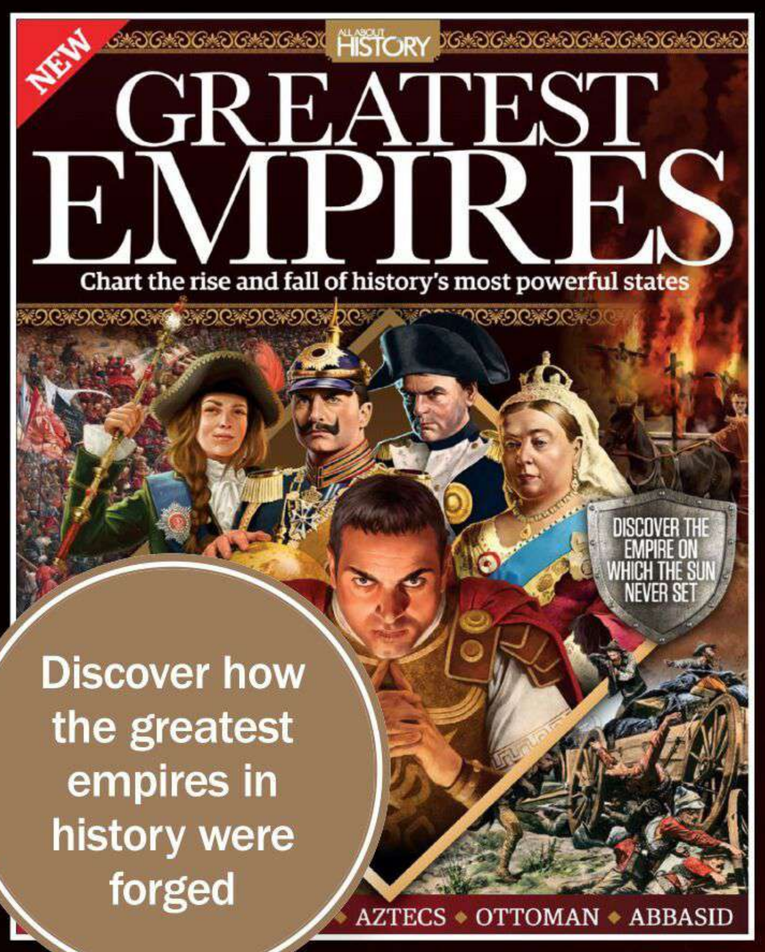
The change in the labour market encouraged a sense of greater independence throughout the lower orders of society. The religious backing given to the feudal system by the Church was that the social hierarchy was ordained by God and that all people should accept their station in life, obey their superiors and not upset the divinely ordained structure of society. Now the glue binding together lord and serf, master and servant, was beginning to dissolve.

Workers started negotiating for higher wages and they demanded new rights. Attempts by authorities to resist change only intensified the pressure until open rebellion finally broke out in 1381-82. In France, war taxation led to the Maillotins Revolt. The Peasants' Revolt in England, meanwhile, went further when Wat Tyler and his men called for the end of all feudal dues and restrictions on fishing and hunting rights. The uprisings were eventually suppressed but the genie was out of the bottle and it couldn't be forced back in.

Other less dramatic but ultimately more formative changes were taking place. People's buying and selling habits shifted attention from the feudal estate to the town while municipal authorities obtained charters from the crown to hold markets. These were originally weekly events but increasing popularity and convenience extended their frequency. From these permanent shops developed along with the growth of wealthy mercantile guilds and the increasing power of municipal authorities.

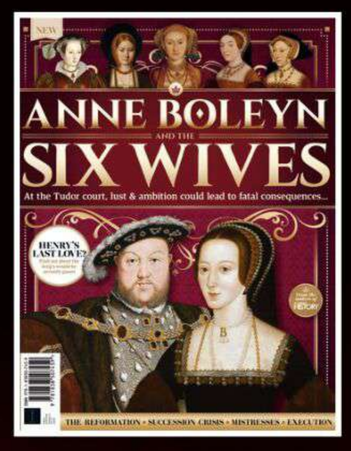
Society became more mobile as sellers and buyers moved from town to town to do business. Urban populations grew on both sides of the narrow seas, leading to the development of international trade and banking. Merchants, whose wealth was based on money rather than land, were able to challenge the old feudal lords, particularly when kings and nobles began to rely on merchants and bankers to finance their wars and expensive courts.

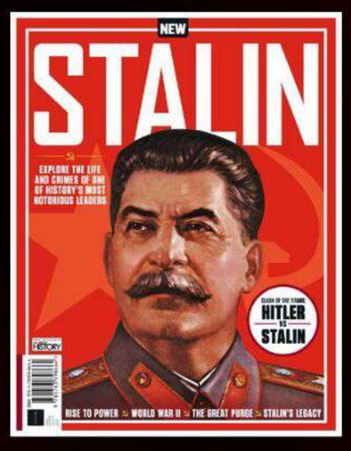
The growth of long-distance trade bringing desirable luxuries from as far away as the Orient, as well as the commercial ties based on basic commodities, created alliances that played their parts in political relationships. Thus, for example, England and Burgundy tended to make common cause against France because of the vigorous trade in English wool to feed the ever-growing Flemish textile manufacturing industry. Europe was becoming too complex a society to be governed by the unsophisticated landlord-tenant laws of feudalism.

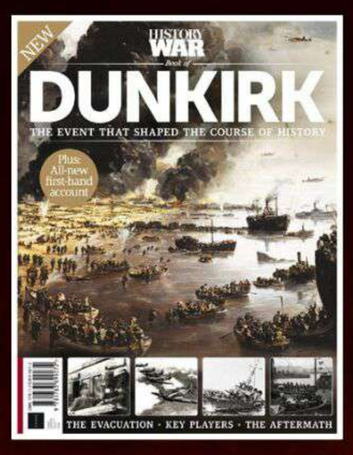


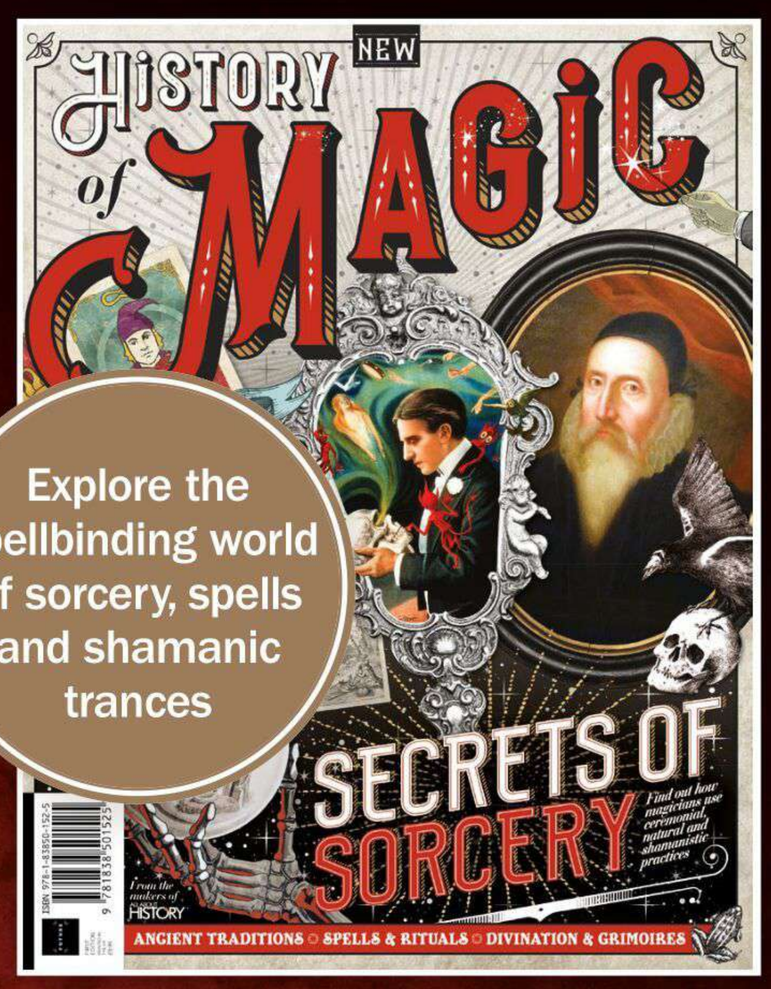
Discover how the greatest empires in history were forged



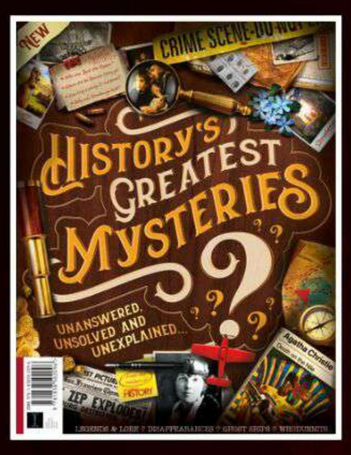


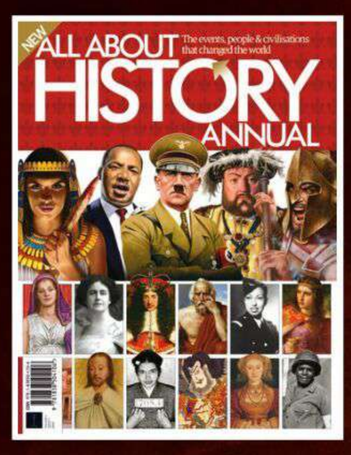






Explore the spellbinding world of sorcery, spells and shamanic trances

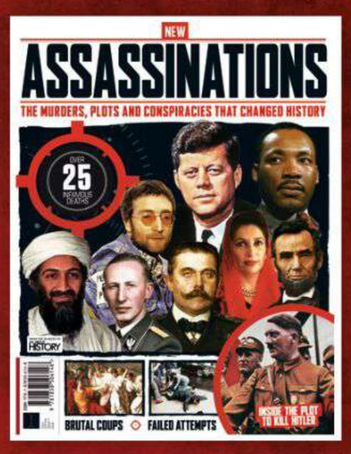


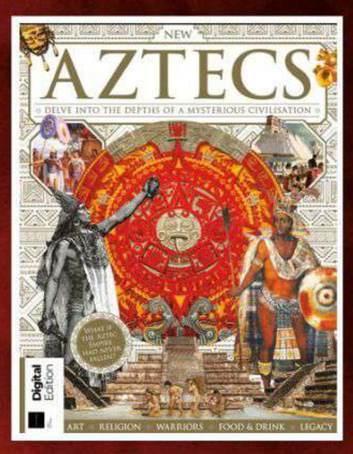












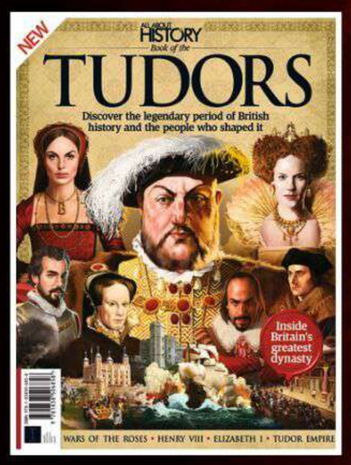
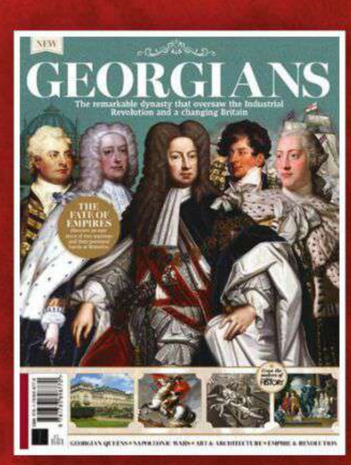
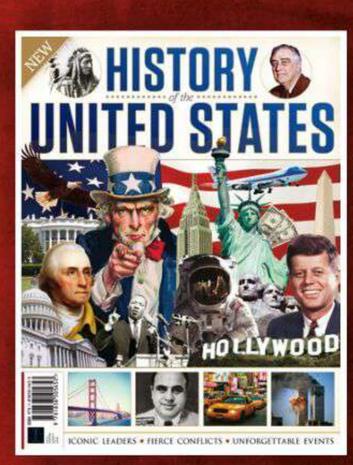


Chart the rise of Hitler and learn how he set Germany on the path to war





Get great savings when you buy direct from us

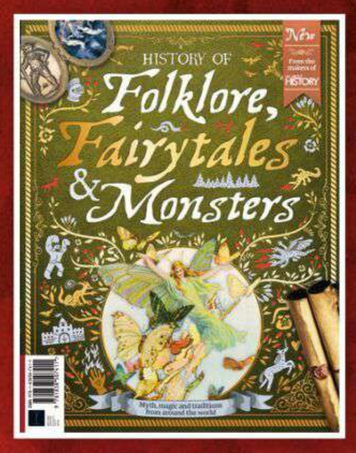
1000s of great titles, many not available anywhere else

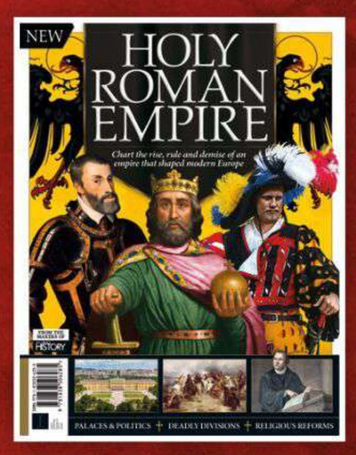
World-wide delivery and super-safe ordering

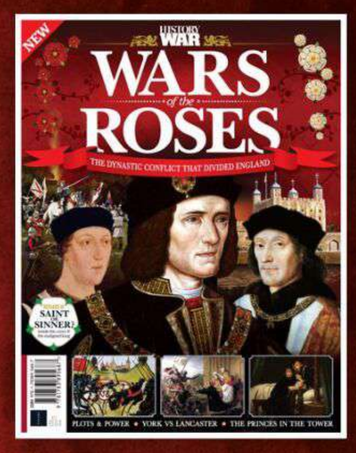










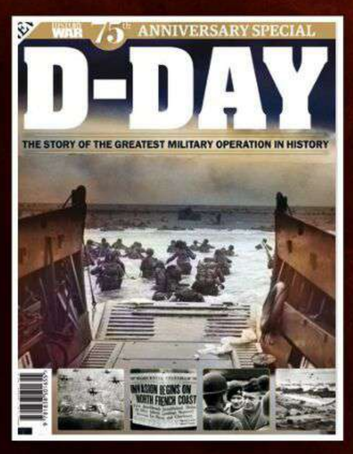




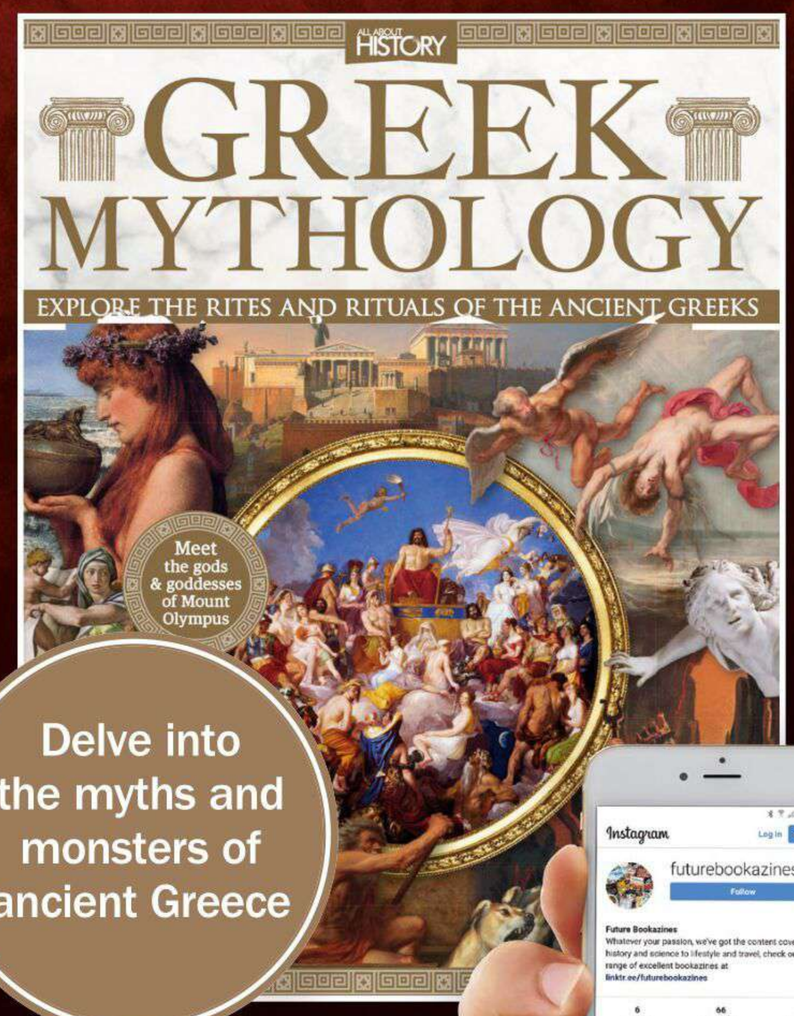
STEP BACK IN TIME WITH OUR HISTORY TITLES

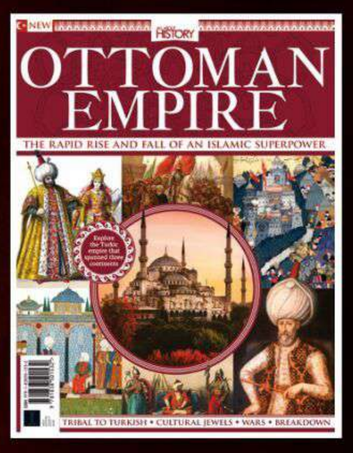
Immerse yourself in a world of emperors, pioneers, conquerors and legends and discover the events that shaped humankind

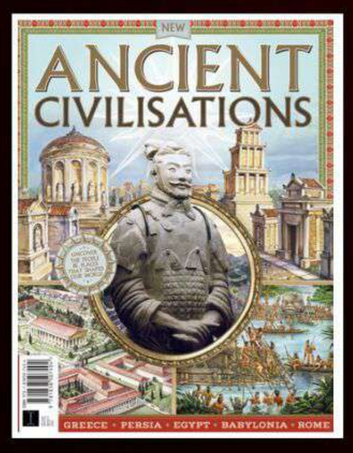


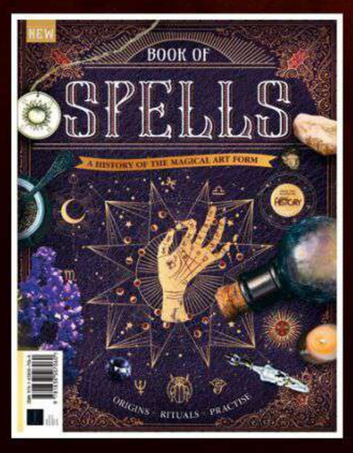












Delve into the myths and monsters of ancient Greece

Follow us on Instagram @futurebookazines

FUTURE

www.magazinesdirect.com

Magazines, back issues & bookazines.

SUBSCRIBE & SAVE UP TO 61%

Delivered direct to your door or straight to your device



Choose from over 80 magazines and make great savings off the store price!

Binders, books and back issues also available

Simply visit www.magazinesdirect.com

No hidden costs · Shipping included in all prices · We deliver to over 100 countries · Secure online payment

FUTURE

magazinesdirect.com

Official Magazine Subscription Store

Book of the

HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

The bitter rivalry between England and France



9020



Battle Triumphs

Over a century of conflict and conquest that reshaped the landscape of France



Legends & Martyrs

Discover the forgotten figures who fought and died for their nations



Feuding Kings

Driven by righteousness, meet the monarchs with an unquenchable thirst for power

9000

BOOKAZINE